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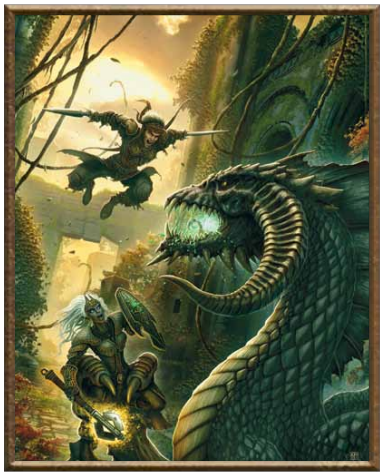

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How do You Spell Victory?

Victory. Elusive for some, inevitable for others. It's the ultimate goal, even for those who don't acknowledge it. But what does it mean? What defines victory for a bold group of adventurers seeking fame and fortune while risking life and limb in one deadly encounter after the next?

Is it fame? It's possible. It's certainly rewarding to be recognized for your accomplishments, even if that recognition comes courtesy of imaginary people in an imaginary land. Fortune? The quest for treasure and magical might can be compelling. Advancement? For some, XP is the best reward.

Or is it something that transcends these classic definitions of victory in D&D? Is it something more nebulous and ephemeral? Clearly, there is no single definition, and I would contend that in some encounters—perhaps the best encounters—different players come away feeling uncertain about whether they've experienced victory at all.

Victory often has a bitter cost, something literature and film realize to great effect. One of my favorite examples comes from a novel I try to re-read at least every few years, *The Count of Monte Cristo*. (If you've never read it, and worse, if you've only ever seen the 2002 version of the film, do yourself a favor and pick up a copy.) In the book, Edmond Dantès, our protagonist, is betrayed by his closest "friends." He spends the rest of the book seeking revenge on those who wronged him. His pursuit of justice becomes so absolute, so singleminded, that he is almost consumed. Without spoiling the book, in the end, he finds his victory, but it isn't what (or how) he thought it would be.

Another great (and nerdier) example comes at the end of *The Empire Strikes Back*. Han is frozen in carbonite and shipped off to Jabba. Luke is almost dead, nearly broken from his encounter with Vader, and sans a hand. But the Rebellion survives to fight another day. So victory, if not at hand (so to speak), remains possible.

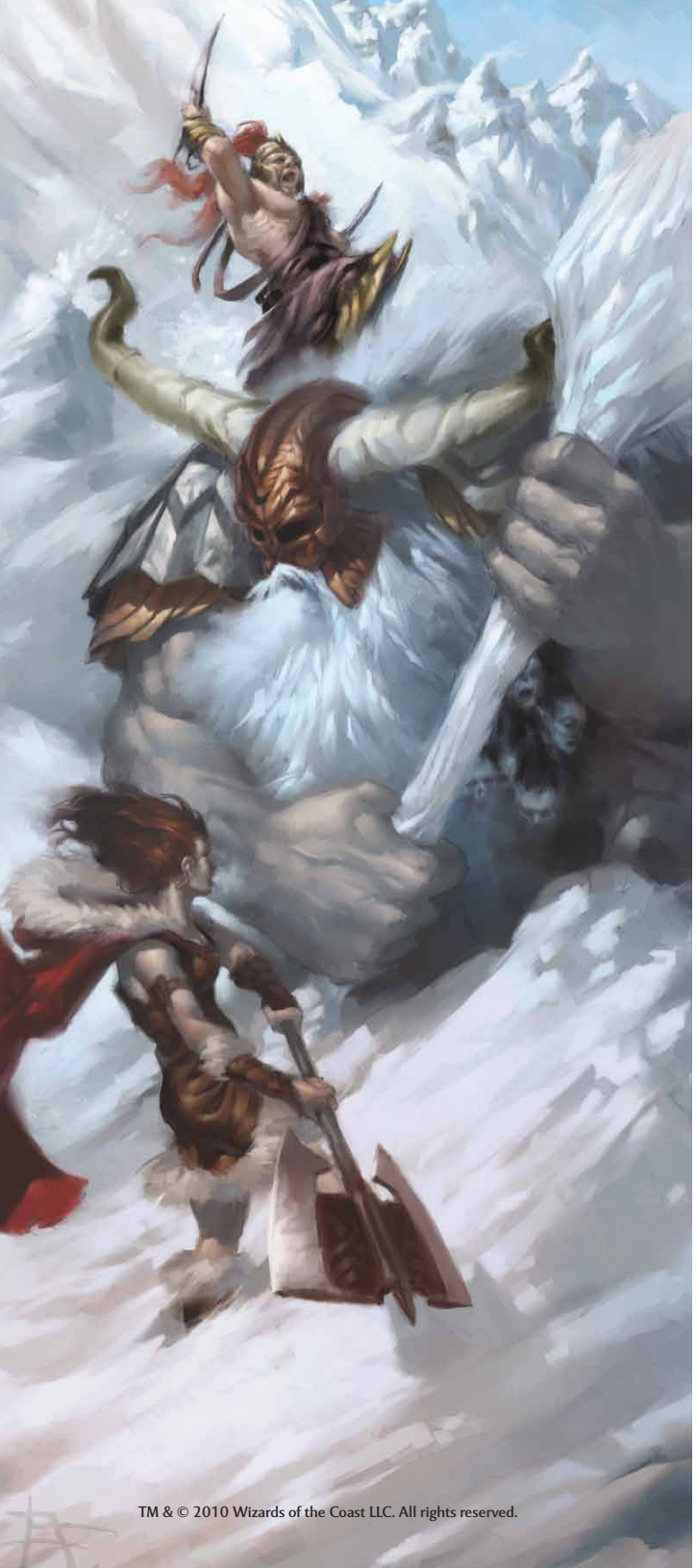
D&D adventures, in contrast, often have very black and white resolutions. When an outcome is bittersweet, it's often accidental. In a recent game I ran, the characters were struck with a beat-stick combination of poor tactics and worse dice. One character was dead, two others had accumulated two death saves, and the remaining two characters had a combined 5 hit points. Standing in for the monsters were one bloodied elemental and two mezzodemons, one unbloodied. The situation looked grim. I may have pulled some punches toward the end and offered the characters—those still standing—an alternative out. I don't believe in punishing a group for what amounts to poor luck.

After their near escape, as the survivors both thanked their lucky stars and mourned a fallen comrade, I heard two distinct reactions. From one of the two players with a surviving character, a sigh of relief and a statement that he felt they'd done well, given the circumstances. From the other, an outright statement of failure. "We lost someone and we had to flee. We failed!" A sense of victory. A sense of defeat.

As for me? Victory. I felt satisfied, as if I'd just settled in to a gluttony-induced, post-Thanksgiving food coma. I loved that the players were conflicted about the outcome. I love that, despite some of their misgivings, they walked away still thinking about the session. I can't wait to run an adventure like this again, or to play in one.

The idea of sacrifice to gain victory is nothing new, yet it feels strangely absent in D&D adventures. It doesn't need to be. I'm not advocating adventures that, say, require a character's death. I just believe that the game has a place for more . . . thoughtful outcomes.

How about you? Share your stories of bittersweet victory, whether planned or not at dndinsider@wizards.com, or over on the D&D Insider community page. Tell us about the times you had to pay a cost for victory in your campaigns, or when you ran a game as DM and imposed a price for your characters' success. We'd love to hear from you!



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On Civilization's Fringes: Humans of the Wild

By Robert J. Schwalb
Illustration by Tyler Jacobson

Humanity is frequently described as an urban-dwelling race—a people more comfortable behind town walls and in bustling cities than they are creeping through the forests or prowling the swamps. Good reason stands behind this assumption. For one, their empire's ashes are hardly cool: The gnoll hordes defeated King Elidyr and his sons only a century ago. Roads still crisscross the lands, towns once pledged to the crown still stand strong, and the memory of that great kingdom lingers in the minds and hearts of its descendants. As well, one can't understate the dangers lurking in the wilds. Beneath its great forests, hidden in the rolling hills, are the savage peoples, the brutal orcs and cunning goblins, and countless others besides. The old cities, whose names are lost to legend, now hold vicious monsters, while the giants stir in their mountain homes and dragons soar on thermals in a world overrun with monsters beyond imagining.

Yet as civilization recedes, it leaves behind people not so willing to surrender their homes and lives to the claw and fang. Thus they remain as they always have in the lands in which they were born, passing down their knowledge to each generation to follow in the hopes of holding the patch of territory for which they bleed and fight. Many different races make their homes in the wilderness, from the elves in their sylvan homes to the goliaths dwelling in mountain fastnesses, but each seems suited to their lands, having adapted long ago to the challenges they present. Humanity, however, must learn the wild's secrets and master them in short order if they want to survive. It is a testimony to humanity's adaptability that they scratch out lives for themselves wherever they go, from the punishing desert to the icy glaciers in the far north. A remarkable race, they not only live, but they thrive wherever they make their homes, proving their grit and determination through the mere act of making lives for themselves where any other people would become extinct.

It is their story we tell. These "wild" humans reject the comforts found in crowded urban centers for the freedom and ever-present danger the wilderness offers. These humans are a rugged folk, made tough by the day-to-day challenges they face. Their lives are hard, resources scarce, and enemies beyond counting, but somehow, through ingenuity or luck, they not only remain, but they thrive on civilization's fringes.

Bogtangle

About thirty years ago, Uri Farwalker, prospector and unabashed adventurer, returned from an expedition to locate and plunder the fabled fortress city Shertasth, a ruin once held by the dreaded yuan-ti long ago. Most knew about the swamp to the south, but until Uri coined the name Bogtangle, it was just the swamp. Few ventured into the blighted mire because it was home to bullywugs, lizardfolk, alligators, venomous serpents, and bloodsucking leeches. Uri, however, believed a ruin existed in the swamp, and so he led his expedition into its heart, knowing he could find good serpent gold among the banyan trees. Uri never found the ruined city, but what he did find were feral humans, whom he dubbed the Tanglers.

History

Finding a human settlement in such a bleak place surprised Uri, but he took advantage of the situation after he and his crew fell ill after picking up something from the leeches. He paused there for several days while everyone recovered, and as he did so, he talked to the people to learn more about them. The Hastaani, as they called themselves, were suspicious of the outsiders, but the gold coins Uri offered for food and shelter put them at ease. They kept no scrolls, no written histories, but instead they shared stories each night over the campfires, telling (or likely retelling) their histories as told to them by their ancestors. From what Uri could piece together, these people were descendants from slaves held by a race of serpent people, who threw off their shackles long ago in a bloody uprising. Having won their freedom, the refugees fled into the swamps where not even the serpent folk would follow. The Swampers claimed the yuan-ti city was an accursed place, shattered by the gods for their blasphemous worship of the demon known as Merrshaulk, and that to seek it out invited the same fate the serpent folk themselves faced.

Homeland

The time Uri spent with the Tanglers left an impression. He saw the conditions they endured firsthand. A depression about a thousand miles in diameter covered the swamp, and low-lying mountains ringed it to all sides except where a wide sluggish river flowed in from the north. Brackish, foul, murky water spread all across the region, so dry land was a commodity. Where it rose, it featured thorn bushes, quicksand, and lairs for nastier denizens.

The Hastaani proved innovative when dealing with their environment, building their homes atop stilts hammered deep into the mud. Each hut had a single communal room, with daub-and-wattle walls, and they roofed it with whatever they had on hand: moss, leaves, reeds, and so on. Rope ladders and walkways kept everyone connected, and every family had at least one skiff with which to hunt frogs, fish, and alligators.

Uri later found out that the village Uri discovered was but one of several communities, some active and thriving, and others abandoned long ago. That each village kept to the same customs, told the same stories, and guarded themselves in the same fashion confirmed they were a single people, with a common heritage, but scattered by circumstances and resources.

People

By an outsider's estimation, the Hastaani are a primitive folk, spread across simple and backward communities without any of the modern innovations found in the civilized lands. Yet, as Uri learned, they made do with what they had, lived in peace with one another, and presented a united face through social obligations and strong connections that acted as a glue for all the people in each village. Though simple in demand, Uri learned they were clever, due to having overcome their hardships through surprising ingenuity and determination.

Physical Qualities

Shorter than most humans, the Hastaani rarely stand taller than five and a half feet and no more than one hundred and fifty pounds. Most have red-brown skin and black or brown hair. Their eyes are somewhat almond-shaped, not unlike the elves, with coloring matching their hair. Uri did encounter a few instances of green or golden eyes, and learned such people were called histachii, or "inheritors." The people believe that such an eye color indicates a connection to the yuan-ti, who sometimes forced slaves to drink potions mixed with their venom to awaken their minds and grow their power.

When Hastaani wear clothing, the simple garb is made from animal skins—usually snakeskin. They adorn their bodies with tasteful piercings in their ears and noses, and favor extensive tattooing, using inks harvested from their environment. Hastaani weaponry tends toward bone and wood, since metal is uncommon and doesn't last long in the swamp. They are excellent archers and smear venom on their arrows. Warriors cover their skin and hair in gray mud to blend into their surroundings.

Outlooks and Beliefs

The Hastaani regard each day they are free from their reptilian masters as a gift and, as such, they treasure the moments, embracing the few pleasures they can coax from their homeland. They have tight-knit communities, where each is responsible for the other, and the community's survival takes precedence over any other concern. What territory they hold, they guard, patrolling their lands to protect the village from attacks. Aside from the yuan-ti, of whom the Hastaani have seen little, they count bullywugs as their archfoes because these wicked humanoids are slavers, raiding villages for captives they can use much as the serpent folk did long ago.

A mystical people, the Hastaani worship versions of the major gods worshiped in civilized lands, though many take on a decidedly less refined guise and might be depicted in the animals living in the Bogtangle. For example, Pelor is depicted as a marsh wren, in whose bright yellow feathers lives the sun. The Hastaani also commune with the primal spirits, paying special homage to Monster Slayers, Old Grandfather, and the Soul Serpent. The demon, Merrshaulk, is real to the Hastaani, and each year, at winter's end, they make animal sacrifices to the demon to avert his gaze from their communities.

Bogtangle Backgrounds

A Bogtangle human has access to these background elements.

Frog Hunter: You are a hunter, a spearer of frogs. A steady hand and keen eye are required to bring down your elusive prey. You had a great responsibility to your tribe, gathering food for the families, but also to patrol the lands to watch for enemies. How did you earn your position as hunter? Did you fight in any major battles? Who taught you?

Associated Skills: Perception, Stealth

Histachii: Your golden eyes set you apart from your kin for they marked you as histachii, touched by Merrshaulk. Your kin believed you had insights into the demon's mind and could protect them from his dreaded bite. How did your heritage shape your destiny as an adventurer? Were your villagers' superstitions correct? Did you have visions or insights? What were they?

Associated Skills: Arcana, Insight

Associated Languages: Draconic

Wayfinder: No one knows the swamp's dangers better than you do, because it was your task to bring news to the neighboring communities and to gather information to bring back to the elders. Your travels revealed much about the swamp's secrets, helping you find secret paths none knew about. Why did you leave your village? Did you become lost? Was your village destroyed while you were away? Are you, perhaps, an envoy to the larger world?

Associated Skills: Endurance, Nature

Bogtangle Bloodline Feats

The following feats represent the Bogtangle human bloodline.

Bogtangle Heritage [Bogtangle Human Bloodline]

Prerequisite: Human

Benefit: You gain the bog hunter's poison daily attack power. Additionally, you gain a +2 feat bonus to Nature checks.

Bog Hunter's Poison — Feat Power

You carefully apply to a weapon a poison that you extracted from local flora and fauna during a rest.

Daily ✦ Poison
Minor Action **Melee** touch
Target: One weapon
Effect: The next attack made with the target weapon that hits before the end of the encounter deals an extra ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends). *Each Failed Saving Throw:* The ongoing damage increases by 5 (to a maximum of ongoing 20 poison damage).
Level 11: Ongoing 10 poison damage (save ends). *Each Failed Saving Throw:* The ongoing damage increases by 5 (to a maximum of ongoing 25 poison damage).
Level 21: Ongoing 15 poison damage (save ends). *Each Failed Saving Throw:* The ongoing damage increases by 5 (to a maximum of ongoing 30 poison damage).

Bogtangle Warrior [Bogtangle Human Bloodline]

Prerequisite: Human, Bogtangle Heritage

Benefit: You gain proficiency in the blowgun and your blowgun damage die increases by one (from d4 to d6).

In addition, you can swap one of your 1st-level at-will attack powers for the *bog hunter's dart* attack power.

Bogtangle Dart — Feat Power

An enemy struck by your dart feels a spreading numbness as the venom does its work.

At-Will ✦ Poison, Weapon
Standard Action **Ranged** weapon
Requirement: You must be wielding a blowgun and use it for this attack.
Target: One creature
Attack: Your highest ability vs. AC
Hit: 1[W] damage plus your highest ability modifier poison damage, and the target is slowed until the end of your next turn. If the target is already slowed, it becomes immobilized until the end of your next turn instead.
Level 21: 2[W] damage.

Foamgather

"T'was the queerest sight I've e'er seen, aye, at least until I seen the Sleeper 'neath the Waves, Melora help us all. Musta been a hundred ships, all tied together so ye could amble from side to side and ne'er dip yer toe inna salt. Generous folk, till ye cross 'em. Me mate, Paul, roughed up a lass thar. Fer his trouble, he lost his stones and went inta the sink like he was chum."

Fact and fiction are hard to separate when it comes to Foamgather, for its people guard their secrets well. They mask the truth with fanciful tales about a surviving prince from a fallen empire, refugees from another world fleeing some monstrous threat, and grand stories about how Foamgather moves between realities, slipping free from those who would do them harm. The most reliable account about Foamgather is from a crusty old sailor who claimed to have been born there. He has no name other than Old Man, but he attracts a following with the stories about his former home.

History

Foamgather's history is a tangled skein made up of countless stories, each a tale of fear, suffering, and loss, shaded with embellishments. Since Foamgather is a tribe consisting of peoples from across the lands, with every culture, nationality, and just about every language represented, in many ways Foamgather's history is the history of the world. It's commonly known among the Unhomed that the first and oldest ships, lost in the fleet's center, belonged to the founders, a strange people who died out long ago. Graybeards whisper they came from another world, fleeing an indescribable menace until they washed up here. Perhaps one day, the founders will return. Then again, maybe the thing they fled will come instead.

Homeland

Qualifying as land only in the loosest sense, Foamgather is an island made from detritus, flotsam, jetsam, and boats of all sizes. It's a tangled mess connected by rope bridges, gangplanks, and crude bridges. The Unhomed live on these boats, taking shelter in the hulls where possible. The larger ships' decks serve as communal areas, where Unhomed gather to trade, exchange news, worship, or court potential partners. Foamgather has temples and taverns, an inn, a school, and several shops, where tradesfolk labor to keep the Unhomed supplied with whatever necessities they require.

People

Since the Unhomed come from different ports, little physically unites them. Short or tall, skinny or fat, red, brown, blue, or pink—these things matter not because loyalty to Foamgather blinds them to physical differences and binds them to a common cause: survival. Clothing and gear comes from salvage and scavenging, so people wear patched and gaudy clothes. Foamdancers defend themselves with spears, crossbows, nets, and clubs, weapons that can do double duty for fishing.

Foamdancer player characters favor the martial classes, with rogues and rangers being the most common.

Outlooks and Beliefs

Before joining Foamgather, a person's past is his or her own business. No one cares about wrongdoings committed elsewhere; only the here and now matters. When a petitioner comes to the community, no one qualifies his or her worth by the individual's deeds or misdeeds, but rather by his or her skills and what each can bring to the community. A fresh slate doesn't mean people can do as they please: The people punish crimes against Unhomed with swift justice. Theft, extortion, assault, murder, and so on bring swift justice, with exile being the most common punishment. For the most severe crimes, the Unhomed hand over the criminal to the sharks.

Melora is Foamgather's patron goddess, because through her will, the community thrives. They depend on the fish swimming through her waters and on her mercy when storms gather on the horizon. Foamgather's tolerant policy also extends to religious beliefs, as long as they remain harmless and do not disrupt the community.

Magic is a talent, much like swordplay, hunting, or strumming a lute, and the Unhomed are quick to welcome seers, healers, and mages. A skilled practitioner can predict a spring storm before it strikes, curb a plague festering in the bilges, or help defend the community when the sea devils attack. The Unhomed might value a magician's contributions, but they never tolerate reckless magic because anything that can endanger the fleet has no place among them.

Enemies and Allies

Foamgather aims for peaceful relations with all their neighbors. They trade with passing ships, pirate and merchant vessels alike, sometimes make forays into settled lands for materials they need (such as nails, tar, and canvas), and deal with aquatic humanoid races, when encountered. They do have enemies, and the sahuagin are the worst foes because the sea devils think the Unhomed are easy prey. If the dangers ever become too great, the fleet might break apart, to chart different courses toward a prearranged meeting spot where they eventually gather into a community once more.

Foamgather Background

A Foamgather human has access to the following background element.

Unhomed: You lived with the Unhomed for many years. You might have been born there, never setting foot on dry land before becoming an adventurer, or you could have used the community as a safe harbor for a time. As Unhomed, you learned the essential trades necessary for survival, and from this training you learned to anticipate the weather, repair ships, become an excellent swimmer, and serve as a cunning negotiator. Why did you leave Foamgather? Were you left behind by accident when the fleet broke apart? Or were you exiled for some accused crime? Were you innocent? If so, why were you blamed?

Associated Skills: Athletics, Bluff, Perception

Associated Languages: Any one except Abyssal or Supernal

Foamgather Bloodline Feats

The following feats represent the Foamgather human bloodline.

Foamgather Heritage [Foamgather Human Bloodline]

Prerequisite: Human

Benefit: You gain the deft diver at-will utility power. Additionally, you gain a +2 feat bonus to Endurance checks and can hold your breath for twice as long as normal.

Deft Diver — **Feat Power**

You move through the water like a fish and can make the most cumbersome weapons deadly underwater.

At-Will
Move Action **Personal**
Effect: You swim a number of squares equal to your speed. Until the end of your next turn, you take no penalties to attack rolls during aquatic combat for using a weapon other than a spear or crossbow.

Foamgather Warrior [Foamgather Human Bloodline]

Prerequisite: Human, Foamgather Heritage

Benefit: You gain proficiency in the net (see *Dragon Magazine Annual*, page 104), and you gain a +1 bonus to attack rolls on all weapon attacks with which you use the net.

In addition, swap one 1st-level at-will attack power for the *net snare* attack power.

Net Snare — **Feat Power**

You catch an enemy in your net and maneuver it into position.

At-Will ✦ Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** or **Ranged** weapon
Requirement: You must be wielding a net and use it for this attack.
Target: One creature
Attack: Your highest ability vs. AC
Hit: 1[W] damage, and the target is grabbed. The grab automatically ends at the start of your next turn. If you used this power as a melee attack, you slide the target 1 square. If you used this power as a ranged attack, you pull the target 1 square.
Level 21: 2[W] damage.

Sunspray

"Crazed, religious fanatics everyone one. They gave me water, sure enough, fed me horse meat, even darned my socks, but when I slept that one night in their little house, they branded me. See here? See this tattoo on my cheek? They did this. Why? Hells, I don't know. They said *it was to protect me from some desert devil, but I tell you, you just don't go inking a person's face without their permission. You know?"*

Sunspray, and those who once lived in Sunspray, hail from Ashanta in the east. The oasis of Sunspray is a well-ordered community founded on ruin, but not everyone there finds the order or the worship of Pelor to their liking. These latter individuals end up in a smaller, filthy outpost called Sunrise, which squats on the Fire Hills shores. The one belief that Sunsprayers and Sunrisers have in common, however, is that one day they will reclaim the city of Ashanta and restore everyone to the ways they have lost.

History

The inhabitants of Sunspray and their cast-offs are refugees from a much older city named Ashanta, which was said to be a single, blooming flower in a desolate wasteland. Behind glittering white walls, one found broad avenues, graceful architecture, and astonishing knowledge because the Ashantii were a cultured people, with innovations in mathematics, philosophy, and astronomy. Ashanta's wonders, though, passed into legend when the great desert fiend, the brown dragon called Shaitan, stirred from the sandy wastes and led its draconic armies to destroy the city that offended him. The city and its people fell before the dragon's fury, and the few survivors fled with their horses and the supplies they could carry into the wastes.

For many years they wandered, but Pelor's light shone the way, revealing shelter, water, and food. Pelor's wisdom revealed the desert's secrets, helping the survivors to survive despite the dangers looming to all sides. And though these blessings were wondrous gifts, the greatest blessing he bestowed was Sunspray, an island in a sandy sea.

Homeland

Sunspray is an oasis, a spot of green in an otherwise barren wasteland, with rolling dunes speckled with bleached bones for as far as the eye can see. Weirdly, the refugees discovered squat buildings arranged around the oasis, suggesting they were not the first to claim this site. If any wondered what had happened to its people, the answers lurked in the howls heard at night and the flitting ghosts drifting from house to house on nights when the moon was full. Still, believing it a gift from Pelor, the Ashantii made it their homes, and here raised their families, husbanded the clean waters, and guarded against the desert predators who troubled them.

People

Sunsprayers are a regal people, tall and muscular, with olive or dark skin, bright eyes in green or blue, and proud regal features. They remove all body hair and often tattoo their faces and arms with sacred writings from Pelor's holy texts. They believe these markings shield them from the worst of the sun's heat and also ward them from their enemies' magic.

Loose, voluminous robes in bright colors are common, since they help retain moisture and deflect the heat. Men and women wear head wrappings and veils to protect against the wind and sand. All clothing features intricate patterns to designate personal accomplishments, family relations, and devotion to Pelor.

The environment makes armor impractical. Warriors carry scimitars, spears, javelins, and shortbows, favoring them because they are easy to use from horseback.

Sunspray adventurers favor divine classes, with avengers and invokers being the most common.

Outlooks and Beliefs

It would be easy for the Sunsprayers to see the desert as their enemy, because the endless sands offer no shelter against the sun and no water to quench their thirst. The desert seemingly goes on and on without end for as far as any have dared traveled, yet they do not in actuality. The desert is alive. Snakes dance across the sands, vultures wheel through the sky, and cacti, though rare, offer nourishment. The desert is a hard place to live, but it rewards those with the persistence and ingenuity to survive.

Other gods might exist, but the Sunsprayers look to Pelor as their patron deity. He is not the kind, merciful, or compassionate deity known in other lands, but is instead a stern patriarch who tests his children and their faith at every turn. The humans do not resent this treatment because they know Pelor fights an eternal war against Shaitan, the dune dragon responsible for their city's destruction and who spawned the draconians against whom the Sunsprayers are sworn to fight.

Pelor is such a significant part of Sunsprayer culture, nearly all magic practiced in their community is of a divine origin. To be chosen as a priest is a great blessing to a family and individuals learn from the scriptures saved from Ashanta's ruins. Other forms of magic are considerably less common and some believe arcane magic comes from Shaitan and should be avoided lest the magician invite Pelor's wrath.

Enemies and Allies

Faith sustains the Sunsprayers: It gives them the hope to find water, the will to keep fighting, and the resolve to fight against the dragon who brought them so low. Draconians, dragonspawn, and kobolds, all Shaitan's servants, test the Sunsprayer's boundaries, raiding their outposts, and sometimes infiltrating their communities. When attacked, the warriors ride out across their desert on their fast horses to track down the enemy and cut them down from behind.

Sunspray Backgrounds

A Sunspray human has access to these background elements.

Dune Ride: You were a warrior in Sunspray, gifted with a noble steed and trained to kill Shaitan's servants on the battlefield. Who was your mentor? What battles did you fight? What ended your career as warrior? Did you leave it with honor or disgrace?

Associated Skills: Endurance, Nature

Voice of Pelor: You were chosen to become a priest, a mystic and spokesperson in Pelor's clergy. Why were you selected? Were your parents well-placed or were you born under an omen? Did you complete your training? How does this training influence you now?

Associated Skills: History, Religion

Sunspray Bloodline Feats

The following feats represent the Sunspray human bloodline.

Sunspray Heritage [Sunspray Human Bloodline]

Prerequisite: Human

Benefit: You gain the bathed in the light encounter utility power. Additionally, you gain a +2 feat bonus to Endurance checks.

Bathed in the Light — Feat Power

You draw upon the power Pelor to seal your wounds, rather than causing more harm.

Encounter ✦ Healing
Immediate Interrupt — **Personal**
Trigger: An enemy would deal fire or radiant damage to you
Effect: Reduce the triggering damage to 0. You regain a number of hit points equal to the fire or radiant damage you would have taken before reducing the damage.

Sunspray Warrior [Sunspray Human Bloodline]

Prerequisite: Human, Sunspray Heritage

Benefit: You gain a +1 bonus to melee and ranged attack rolls while mounted.

In addition, swap one 1st-level at-will attack power for the *sunspray dance* attack power.

Sunspray Dance — Feat Power

You spin your weapon through the air, catching the sun's radiance to send it slashing through your foe.

At-Will ✦ Radiant, Weapon
Standard Action — **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Your highest ability vs. AC
Hit: 1[W] + your highest ability modifier radiant damage, and the target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls until the start of your next turn.
Level 21: 2[W] + your highest ability modifier damage.

Wolfstone

"We stood fast against the gathering storm and performed as our duty demanded, but what of our southern kin? Where is our food? Where are our reinforcements? We fight, we live, we raise families, and we die, all while preserving this forgotten castle on this accursed frontier, and against an unrelenting horde who never flees for long. I say, if ever they do bring the promised aid, I am of a mind to cut them down straightaway."

In Nerath's final days, King Elidyr recalled the garrisons from the frontiers, urging them to surrender their posts to shore up the cities against the gnoll hordes. Many returned to their native lands, but some stayed behind to shield the flagging kingdom against the other arrayed enemies as they had since the kingdom first spread beyond its first cities. Such is Wolfstone's story, because far to the north, raised among the icy peaks of a jagged range stands a great and sprawling fortress, where doughty defenders still guard against the darkness these many years after Nerath's fall.

History

When the call to abandon Wolfstone came, it was clear to the garrisons that they could not completely leave their posts because the frost giants mustering in sight of their walls would overrun the citadel and tumble into the south as they had long striven to do. Many warriors, supporting personnel, and traders did answer the call to leave, but the bravest warriors, along with their families, remained. So while Nerath entered its death throes, Wolfstone stood fast, its defenders numerous and able enough to protect the walls and drive back their own enemies. Yet they never found out what happened to the king or their nation, because no word came to them and no reinforcements arrived to relieve them. These warriors were alone on the world's edge and, if they wanted to survive, they would do so through their own resourcefulness because no help was ever going to come.

Homeland

The glaciers and icy storms crash against the jagged frozen mountains marking the border between the untamed wild and the cultivated lands to the south. Manning these mountains from walls, turrets, and keeps bristling on their barren heights are the bold men and women charged with defending humankind's empire from hostile invaders. These fortifications together are called Wolfstone, so named for the wolf's head peak standing at their defenses' center.

People

Wolfstone's inhabitants are hardy humans—big, muscular, and heavyset. Men have thick beards and long shaggy hair, and women are plain-faced and grim. Man or woman, all are strong and tough, tempered through constant battle with the enemies beyond their walls.

Furs are a staple in their clothing, with wolf or bear skins being the most common. Wolfstone inhabitants pass down materials through the generations, patched with curtains, tablecloths, and whatever else they have on hand. In battle, warriors don heavy hide armor and wield massive weaponry, such as greataxes, greatswords, mauls, and picks.

Wolfstone player characters favor martial, divine, and primal classes, with fighters, battle clerics, and barbarians the most common.

Outlooks and Beliefs

Wolfstones value strength, honor, and battle prowess above all other virtues, and all strive to live up to the examples of their predecessors who laid down their lives to protect their homelands. Training begins when a child is old enough to walk, with a practice sword thrust into these children's hands so one day they can replace the fallen. So ingrained are the military traditions, everyone living in Wolfstone can fight, from the lowliest scullion to the hoariest elder.

The world darkens, drifting toward the final days when the gods wage war against the dark elemental lords. The people of Wolfstone, devoted to Kord the battle god, believe they are soldiers in this apocalyptic battle and that laying down their lives to fight the giants, winter wolves, and the horrific undead drifting through the snow is not only honorable, but also demanded in the celestial war. In addition to Kord, many folk also include the Raven Queen in their prayers, beseeching the dark goddess to ease the winter and lend her strength against the evil hordes bearing down on them.

Although not unknown to the Wolfstone's warriors, magic is feared and misunderstood. The few mages living in Wolfstone learned the craft from their fathers and mothers who were also mages, and they live apart from the rest. Priests, however, find much more welcome here, especially those who channel Kord's power to give them an advantage against the enemy.

Primal magic is relatively new, and it is expressed through the berserkers who fight on the walls and lead expeditions onto the glaciers. Some have begun to realize more is behind the rages than simple battlelust and have identified the primal spirits who sometimes goad the warriors to ever-more-daring

acts. From this study, some have started harnessing primal magic in new and effective ways, and the evocations they perform have been invaluable in the ongoing war against the giants.

Enemies and Allies

The enemy is out there, roaming the glacier. It is the frost giant reaver, the winter wolf, and the undead stumbling forward in armor wrought from ice with blades as sharp as a winter gale. These foes emerge from the swirling snow to lay siege to the fortress as they have for nearly one hundred years, though each time the defenders throw them back.

Until a decade ago, the Wolfstoners faced the gathering evil alone, but a dwarf band from a distant outpost brought supplies, arms, and armor. Seeing the human plight, they pledged their service for a time. Some suspect the dwarves have an ulterior motive since they seem overly concerned with the deep tunnels below the complex, but whether they came under false pretenses, they are stalwart allies on the walls. Dwarf bones now join those once belonging to humans in the warrior crypts below the walls, and the dwarves offer not one word of complaint, proving as fearsome and as ferocious as their human counterparts.

Wolfstone Backgrounds

A Wolfstone human has access to these background elements.

Berserker: Wild and fearless, you threw yourself into every battle, hoping to earn a place at Kord's side after a valiant death. What brought on this battle frenzy? Was it primal in origin or madness? Why did you leave Wolfstone?

Associated Skills: Athletics, Intimidate

Padding Wolf: You were a scout for Wolfstone, sent out onto the glacier to ascertain enemy movements, numbers, and supplies and bring information back to the fortress. How long did you work in this position before you left it? Did you ever find information of great help? Did you ever bring back information that later proved false?

Associated Skills: Perception, Stealth

Associated Languages: Giant

Wolfstone Bloodline Feats

The following feats represent the Wolfstone human bloodline.

Wolfstone Heritage [Wolfstone Human Bloodline]

Prerequisite: Human

Benefit: You gain the unrelenting mountain daily utility power. Additionally, you gain a +2 feat bonus to Athletics checks.

Unrelenting Mountain — Feat Power

You stand tough like the eternal fortress lands of Wolfstone, refusing to bend or break in the face of an enemy.

Daily ✦ Stance
Minor Action **Personal**

Effect: You enter the unrelenting mountain stance. Until the stance ends, you reduce the distance an enemy can push, pull, or slide you by 2 squares. While you are bloodied and in this stance, you also gain resist 5 all and cannot be knocked prone.

Wolfstone Warrior [Wolfstone Human Bloodline]

Prerequisite: Human, Wolfstone Heritage

Benefit: When you spend an action point to make a melee or ranged attack while you're bloodied, the attack deals 1d6 extra damage.

In addition, you can swap one 1st-level at-will attack power for the *wolfstone frenzy* attack power.

Wolfstone Frenzy — Feat Power

Your anger tears free from your throat in a blood-curdling howl as you bring your weapon down in a savage chop.

At-Will ✦ Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Your highest ability vs. AC
Hit: 1[W] + your highest ability modifier, and you push each enemy adjacent to you 1 square.
Level 21: 2[W] + your highest ability modifier damage.

About the Author

Robert J. Schwalb is an award-winning game designer who has contributed design to or developed over one hundred roleplaying game titles for Dungeons & Dragons®, *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay*, *A Song of Ice and Fire Roleplaying Game*, *Star Wars Roleplaying Game*, and the d20 System®. Some of his more recent work for Wizards of the Coast is in *Player's Handbook® 3*, *Martial Power™ 2*, and *Draconomicon™ 2: Metallic Dragons* and in the pages of *Dragon®* and *Dungeon® magazines*. Robert lives in Tennessee.

Underhanded and Overconfident

By Ari Marmell

Illustrations by Kerem Beyit and William O'Connor

It's one of the most prevalent archetypes in fiction—not just fantasy, but sci-fi, adventure, thriller, almost anything you can think of. And why not? Who doesn't love that character? He or she is a fast-talker, whose mouth gets this character out of trouble about as often as it gets him or her into it. He or she is a risk-taker, sometimes for gain, sometimes for a cause, sometimes just for fun. He or she is dishonest but has a hidden core of morality.

Or maybe he doesn't. You can never really tell . . .

He's the scoundrel. Sometimes a liar, sometimes a thief, sometimes a mercenary, sometimes a diplomat, and sometimes, just sometimes, exactly who you need.

The material that follows offers advice on how to roleplay various aspects of the scoundrel and provides new mechanical tools (including two new paragon paths) for doing so.

"He's a card-player,
a gambler . . .
A scoundrel. You'd like him."

—Han Solo,
The Empire Strikes Back

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For Example . . .

Han Solo is the most obvious scoundrel in modern fiction, so much so that the Star Wars® RPG used "scoundrel" as the name of the class that represents him. But if you're looking for inspiration, some additional examples (among many others) include:

- ✦ Captain Jack Sparrow, *Pirates of the Caribbean*
- ✦ Dean Winchester, *Supernatural*
- ✦ Locke, *The Lies of Locke Lamora*
- ✦ James Bond
- ✦ The Doctor, *Doctor Who*

These last two are certain to cause debate, but when you consider that both are deliberate risk-takers with great personal secrets, who make frequent use of wits, deception, and fast-talking to defeat their foes, then surely they must qualify. They, as much as anything else, confirm the flexibility of the scoundrel archetype.

Playing a Scoundrel

A scoundrel is a personality type—a way of playing the character, not a specific class. It's easy to equate the rogue with the scoundrel instinctively, and indeed the rogue is one of the classes best suited to that archetype—but it's far from the only one. Bards, warlocks, warlords (yes, warlords), and wizards make fantastic scoundrels, but you can play any class as such, even if perhaps not as effectively. In the traditional D&D® campaign, humans, half-elves, halflings, tieflings, and changelings are most likely to produce scoundrels, but again, such a character can come from any race.

What a Scoundrel Isn't

Playing a scoundrel is not an excuse to be disruptive to the campaign, or to be a jerk to your fellow players. Obviously, it can have an impact, just like choosing to play any sort of character has an impact. You're probably sarcastic, and you might get the party in trouble more often than anyone else by taking unnecessary risks or mouthing off to the wrong nonplayer character. But you should make this behavior an occasional trait, not a defining characteristic. D&D is a cooperative game, and the fact that you're playing a scoundrel doesn't alter the cooperative nature of the game. It's not a license to lie to or betray the other characters, nor to insist that your own social skills influence their behavior. Sure, some groups do like playing with that level of intra-party conflict, and if your friends are happy with that, have at it—but only if you clearly established this style of play ahead of time, and only if everyone is onboard with it. Otherwise, you're still first and foremost one of a group of friends playing a game together; and, in-character, you're still one of a party who has to rely on and trust each other to survive.

What a Scoundrel Is

The archetypal scoundrel has specific traits. Your character doesn't have to have all these traits—just enough to shape how he or she behaves.

The Scoundrel Is Skillful

Some rely on charm to talk their way out of bad situations (and into good—and occasionally naughty—ones). Others rely on their silver tongues to deceive everyone around them. The scoundrel has the right connections in all the wrong places and knows just enough hidden information to get in trouble.

Role vs. Roll

Some players prefer to roleplay their attempts at Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidation; others prefer to let the dice speak for them. Either of these are perfectly acceptable playing styles, but when portraying a scoundrel, we strongly suggest at least some measure of roleplaying and in-character conversation. You're going to both convey and experience the feel of the scoundrel more if you try to get into the fast-talking.

Of course, the dice should still play their part; the dice determine your ultimate success or failure. And it doesn't matter if you are all that eloquent; what matters, in terms of getting into the character, is the attempt.

When creating your scoundrel, choose skills appropriately. You'll definitely want either Bluff or Diplomacy, if not both; as much as anything is "required" for building a scoundrel, those skills are. Streetwise and Intimidate are solid choices, as is either History or at least one monster knowledge skill.

Genuine Charm

Notice that we said "Bluff *or* Diplomacy." You can focus on both—many scoundrels do—but you don't have to. It's easy to fall into the trap of assuming that every scoundrel is a liar and that the charm is always false, but for many scoundrel characters, the charm is genuine. They might talk a good game, but it's a game they honestly mean. The face he or she wears just might be his or her real one.

Build your character to emphasize these skills. Consider feats that add to those skills, and utility powers that use them. (Skill powers, debuted in *Dragon* #379, are an excellent way to accentuate skills.) When playing your character, look for every excuse to use these skills—even if they're not necessarily the optimal ones at the time.

Skill options, more than anything else, are why certain classes are more suited to portraying scoundrels. If your class doesn't have the proper skills, it's much harder (albeit not impossible, with the right selection of feats and backgrounds) to build a character who corresponds with the archetype.

The Scoundrel Doesn't Fight Fair

Honor is for losers; if it's worth fighting for, it's worth cheating for. In combat, make every effort to flank your foes, even if doing so isn't necessary for triggering specific powers. You enjoy striking from hiding, using Bluff to feint, or focusing on prone targets. Even better, gang up with your allies against a specific enemy, taking it down quickly before moving on to the next. Choose feats that allow you to act first and avoid delaying your actions (though you might ready an action to take advantage of a foe's weakness).

You're more interested in gaining every possible advantage than in maximizing damage. Choose powers that daze, blind, or cause penalties, even if that means passing over powers that do more damage.

Most importantly, you should constantly turn the environment to your benefit. Sure, it's an obvious choice to push enemies over nearby precipices, but look for more creative or subtle opportunities. Pull the hanging tapestry down over the goblins' heads, or kick over the table on which the barroom brawler stands. Swing on something to cross the battle without drawing opportunity attacks. The "true" scoundrel should be using the "Actions the Rules Don't Cover" techniques in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* at least once every session, if not more.

The Scoundrel Is Overconfident and a Risk Taker

You're damn good at what you do, and you want everyone else to know it. You love intricate schemes, but you rarely have a backup, because failure seldom crosses your mind. You'd rather the group choose an option and go with it—even if "going with it" includes lots of planning and reconnaissance—rather than standing around debating which of your various options is optimal. You agree to almost any plan that relies on your abilities, and on the rare occasions you fail, it's always something or someone else's fault. Sure, the dice might have come up "1," but that result is an out-of-character explanation. In-character, the duke didn't buy your bluff because you lacked necessary information; or the monster heard you coming because the fighter made a sound that, even though he was hanging way back, echoed through the passageway; or you missed your sneak attack because the sun came out from behind the clouds and got in your eyes.

If things have been too quiet for awhile, you're happy to make your own excitement. You gamble more than you can cover, or range too far ahead while scouting, or ask a bit more of the baron than you need.

Again, your goal isn't to place your party in unnecessary trouble—at least, not often. In-character, you want to push the envelope without necessarily considering the consequences, but don't carry your behavior to extremes unless the rest of the group is enjoying it as much as you are. If it threatens to cause problems, limit your efforts to more innocuous risks such as card games or bar brawls.

The Scoundrel Is More Than She Seems

Most scoundrels in fiction eventually do the right thing. It might be for the sake of a loved one, because they've finally seen the plight of the less fortunate, or recognized the villain's true evil, but the scoundrel shows a real heart beneath his or her sarcastic exterior.

But even those who don't do the right thing are hiding something about themselves. Decide what

that is about yourself. It could be your true alignment, making you a better person than you let on, but you have plenty of other options. You might be a member of a secret criminal organization—one that's going to come down on you as your loyalties become ever more devoted to your party. You could be one of the aristocracy, having started adventuring as a lark—or because something horrible happened to the rest of your family. You might not be the class, or the race, you initially appear to be. You might be a secret member of an evil organization, and it could have tasked you with betraying the party—eventually, though, you come to side with your fellow adventurers instead. (Again, unless your group is one of the rare few that enjoys player conflict, siding with the other characters is a far better option than actual betrayal.)

It doesn't matter what your secret is, but if you can make it one that provides your DM with extra adventure hooks, that option could go over well. What matters is that you have one you feel is worth protecting.

Scoundrel Feats

Consider adding one of the following flavorful feat options to your scoundrel character.

Heroic Tier Feats

Any feat in this section is available to a character of any level who meets the prerequisites.

Building Camaraderie

Prerequisite: Trained in Diplomacy

Benefit: When you succeed on a Diplomacy check, you gain a +1 bonus to Diplomacy checks until the end of the encounter. This bonus is cumulative with itself. When you fail a Diplomacy check or a Bluff check, or attempt an Intimidate check or any hostile action, you lose any bonus from this feat and cannot gain the bonus again during this encounter.

Distracting Feint

Prerequisite: Trained in Bluff

Benefit: When you make a Bluff check to cause an enemy to grant combat advantage to you and succeed, the enemy also grants combat advantage to your allies.

Skilled Feint

Prerequisite: Rogue, trained in Bluff

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus to Bluff checks made to feint. In addition, when you make a Bluff check to cause an enemy to grant combat advantage to you and succeed, your Sneak Attack deals an extra die of damage to that enemy until the end of your next turn.

Scoundrel Paragon Paths

Phantasmagoric Scoundrel

"Look behind you. No, really . . ."

Prerequisite: Trained in Arcana, trained in Bluff or Thievery

For some scoundrels, the ability to convince and deceive by using language is insufficient. They want to fool the eyes, not just the ears; they want to find far more reliable means of tricking those who would stand against them.

Some of these, such as you, choose to dabble in magic. Either through training or innate talent, you have mastered the art of illusion, and you combine that with your own wits and rapier-sharp tongue to build a repertoire of perfect deception.

Phantasmagoric Scoundrel Path Features

Blinding Action (11th level): When you use an encounter or daily power to hit a target that grants combat advantage to you, you can spend an action point to blind the target until the end of your next turn.

Combat Illusionist (11th level): You gain one arcane illusion encounter attack power of 7th level or lower from any class of your choice. You cannot choose a power you already know. At 21st level, you can replace this power with an arcane illusion encounter attack power of 13th level or lower from any class of your choice.

Expert Phantasmagorist (11th level): You can master and perform rituals of the deception category as though you had the Ritual Caster feat. In addition, once per day you can perform a deception ritual of your level or lower without spending the component cost (though you must still use any focus required by the ritual).

Illusory Communication (16th level): Once per encounter before you make a Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate check, you can choose to roll an Arcana check also. You can use the Arcana check in place of the original check.

Master Phantasmagorist (16th level): One additional time each day, you can perform a deception ritual of your level or lower without spending the component cost (though you must still use any focus required by the ritual).

Phantasmagoric Scoundrel Exploits

Corner of the Eye — Phantasmagoric Scoundrel Utility 12

Illusory sounds and flickering shadows make empty space appear menacing and dangerous.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Illusion, Zone
Minor Action **Area** burst 1 within 10

Effect: The burst becomes a zone that lasts until the end of the encounter. Enemies treat the zone as difficult terrain and grant combat advantage to melee and close attacks while within the zone. While the zone lasts, you can perform the following actions:
✦ Minor Action: Move the zone 1 square.
✦ Move Action: Move the zone your speed.

Deadly Visions — Phantasmagoric Scoundrel Attack 20

You implant horrifying images in your enemy's mind and blood, besieging their psyche.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Illusion; Implement or Weapon
Standard Action **Varies**

Effect: Make an at-will attack against a single target. If the attack hits, it deals 2d10 extra damage and the target suffers debilitating hallucinations (save ends). Until the target saves, it grants combat advantage and chooses at the start of its turn each round whether to take 10 psychic damage or be dazed until the start of its next turn.

Miss: Half damage, and the target is dazed until the end of its next turn.

Silver-Tongued Scoundrel

"If anyone had to catch me, good sir, I'm delighted it was someone of your abilities. Pray tell, how did you manage it?"

Prerequisite: Trained in Bluff and Diplomacy

Almost every scoundrel relies on their wit and their words to some extent, but you have refined them to a cutting edge. Your mouth is a sharper weapon than your sword, and you rely on it at least as much.

You might be a con artist, looking to earn your way in the world at the expense of others. You could be a diplomat, a spy, or a master of disguise. Or perhaps you developed these skills accidentally, discovering as you adventured that you preferred wars of wits to battles of blades.

Silver-Tongued Scoundrel Path Features

Deceptive Action (11th level): When you spend an action point to take an extra action, you also gain combat advantage against one enemy you can see until the end of your next turn. In addition, you score a critical hit against this enemy on a natural roll of 18–20 until the end of your next turn.

Fast-Talker (11th level): The first time you succeed on a Bluff or Diplomacy check in each encounter, one ally you can see gains a +5 power bonus to his or her next Bluff or Diplomacy check before the end of the encounter.

Deceptive Challenge (16th level): You can roll a Bluff check or Diplomacy check in place of your standard initiative check.

Silver-Tongued Scoundrel Exploits

Diverting Taunt — Silver-Tongued Scoundrel Attack 11

Your bewildering and enraging taunts distract your target from far more devastating attacks to come.

Encounter ✦ Martial, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Effect: The target grants combat advantage for this attack.
Attack: Highest ability vs. AC

Hit: 2[W] + highest ability modifier damage, and the target grants combat advantage and cannot make opportunity attacks until the end of your next turn.

Master Negotiator — Silver-Tongued Scoundrel Utility 12

Through careful study of body language, intonations, and other subtle clues, you can tailor your own efforts to your adversary.

Daily ✦ Martial
Standard Action **Personal**

Effect: Choose Bluff or Diplomacy. Once per round until the end of the encounter, you can roll twice when rolling that skill and choose the higher of the two rolls.

Silver Tongue, Silver Blade — Silver-Tongued Scoundrel Attack 20

Through a combination of careful strikes and witty barbs, you keep your enemy reeling.

Daily ✦ Martial, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Highest ability vs. Reflex

Hit: 3[W] + highest ability modifier damage. In addition, you can choose one: the target takes a –2 penalty to attack rolls or grants combat advantage until the end of your next turn.

Effect: Until the end of the encounter, when you hit the target with an attack, you can choose one: the target takes a –2 penalty to attack rolls or grants combat advantage until the end of your next turn.

About the Author

Ari Marmell was born in New York, moved to Houston when he was a year old, moved to Austin when he was 27, but has spent most of his life living in other worlds through a combination of writing and roleplaying games. He has been writing more or less constantly for the last dozen years, though he has only been paid for it the past five. He is the author of multiple roleplaying game supplements including work on Dungeons & Dragons®. Ari lives in Austin with his wife George and two cats. Visit him online at his Dungeons & Dragons blog page, at his website, on Twitter, or at his Facebook fan page.

Familiar Power: Sorcerers

By Arthur Wright

Illustration by Jorge Lacera & SC Watson

"The trick," said Magnus, never taking his eyes off Grimble, "is trust."

Harkr watched as the small vortex of air gave a high-pitched whine and darted in to distract the yuan-ti cultist. The scaled creature hissed in annoyance . . . and then in sudden pain, as the point of Harkr's greatsword emerged from its chest.

"Grimble! Back to me!" Shouted Magnus as he turned his attention to the remaining yuan-ti. The tiny tornado obliged the sorcerer, darting quickly back to his side.

Harkr watched, impressed, but unwilling to show it. The half-orc began to turn to bring his full attention back to the snake-like creatures.

But that momentary lapse was all the yuan-ti needed.

"Watch yourself!" shouted Magnus, as he finished a spell. A rumbling filled the air as a pair of thunderous bolts burst from his hands, streaking toward a pair of yuan-ti archers perched on the rockpile above. Bows drawn, the creatures seemed poised to feather the half-orc with their wickedly barbed arrows. Power erupted around Grimble, floating near Magnus's head, as more thunder seemed to echo within the funnel of the elemental, amplifying the magic unleashed by its sorcerous master.

The blast of thunder caught both the archers square in their chests. They reeled, and both arrows flew wide as the archers were knocked off their feet and the top of the rock pile.

Harkr smiled grimly as he charged nimbly up the rocks to stand over the prone forms of the yuan-ti.

Not bad, he thought, as he raised his greatsword for a finishing blow. Not bad for a gust of wind.

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The human sorcerer Magnus was a prominent disciple of the powerful elf wizard Cwell. A devotee of the arcane arts who believed that great untapped power lay within the bond between master and familiar, Cwell taught many apprentices, of many arcane backgrounds, his theories on accessing that power.

Magnus was one of his earliest and most astute pupils. While he didn't adhere to Cwell's particular brand of spellcasting or emphasis on the wizard's scholarly pursuit of power, he recognized the potency of Cwell's theorems. By the time Magnus joined with Cwell, he had already acquired his own familiar: a small tornado-like spirit of the air he called Grimble.

Magnus was rarely seen without his companion, even before he sought out his wizard mentor. The two of them had made a name for themselves in a campaign against marauding gnolls near Hammerfast. Even then, those who recalled Magnus later said that he was something of a recluse. He would spend hours alone with Grimble, the two of them chattering away to one another in the strange tongue only they could understand.

It was during the final assault on Hammerfast by the gnoll clan known as the Wicked Fang tribe that Magnus seemed to experience an epiphany. Harried by the gnoll chieftain, a brute called Gorkka, Magnus had retreated to a pile of rubble near the Gate Ward. Clambering atop it, spells mostly depleted, he seemed doomed when trapped by the wounded by wickedly strong gnoll Gorkka.

By Magnus's account, what followed was a moment of sheer desperation. To onlookers, it looked like a moment of arcane brilliance. The story of Magnus's triumph is still recounted in the inns and taverns of Hammerfast to this day.

Almost without thinking, Magnus directed Grimble toward the raging gnoll. As his massive greataxe swung down to cleave the pesky whirlwind, a flash of crackling lightning split the air. The blast rocked Gorkka onto his heels, leaving him singed and blinking for several seconds. Of Grimble, there was no sign.

With a furious roar, Magnus raised his staff and unleashed a bolt of acid at the stunned gnoll. The blast struck Gorkka square in the face, and the gnoll leader howled in pain. His followers heard the anguished cry and panicked, signaling a retreat. In intense pain from the burning acid eating away at the flesh and bone of his jaw, Gorkk dropped his greataxe, turned tail, and fled the battlefield. The gnolls of the Wicked Fang would not bother Hammerfast again for many generations.

Magnus found inspiration in the cobbled battlefield magic channeled through his familiar. Soon, after seeking out more information on the mostly unexplored field of familiar magic, he heard stories of Cwell, and sought the elf out.

Over the years, Magnus came and went from Cwell's tower. He would learn what his mentor had to teach, then leave to explore and find his own applications of this unique approach to arcane magic. He made a name for himself as a powerful sorcerer, and he eventually found a group of companions with whom he adventured for many years. But he never found a great deal of comfort among other people, instead confiding in and spending most of his time with Grimble.

A successful adventuring career followed, during which Magnus aided any and all arcanists interested in expanding their knowledge of the link with a familiar. Ambitious or meek, good or evil—he was willing to share his knowledge with them all.

In time, his path led him back toward Hammerfast. It was there, in a dark glen on the road to the dwarven fastness, that Magnus's party encountered a band of gnoll raiders, led by a horribly disfigured, massive gnoll with a steel jaw. This bestial creature fought with unmatched ferocity and seemed intent on winnowing Magnus away from his companions. The sorcerer was forced further and further from the rest of his friends, until they could barely see him through the heavy screen of trees.

There, in a small clearing, he came face to face once more with Gorkka. The gnoll remembered the human sorcerer who had maimed him so badly, costing him his pride and his tribe. The former chieftain had waited for years for this opportunity, praying for Yeenoghu to deliver the human to him once more.

With a howl, Gorkka charged, raising his mighty greataxe. Once more, Magnus sent Grimble into the path of the charging beast. And as before, Gorkka swung at the whirlwind in his path, determined that this time would be different. And it was.

Magnus's companions—for few would call him more than that—say that the sorcerer had a small smile on his face when it happened. They say he looked at peace, as if this were a moment he'd been waiting for.

There was a flash of power, followed a split second later by the boom of thunder and pulse of power that stretched for a hundred yards in every direction. When the dazzle faded from their vision, Magnus's companions say that the first thing they saw was Gorkka, standing rigid, the gnoll's every hair on end and crackling with arcane current. And then the mighty Gorkka fell, struck dead by the might of Magnus's magic. Of Magnus, there was no sign.

But as Gorkka fell, they saw it. A human skull floated in the air, surrounded by a vortex of air crackling with bolts of lightning. Some said later that the skull winked at them. Others that it nodded respectfully. Then it vanished.

To a one, Magnus's companions believed that he'd finally found his ultimate wish—to magically merge himself with his familiar, stripping away the trappings of flesh and existing in an unmatched magical state. They wondered, as have others to this day, if Magnus were out there still, exploring this world or those beyond it.

When "Active Familiar" appears as a header in a power description, the associated entry describes an additional effect that applies if you have a familiar in the active state.

Level 1 Encounter Spells

Familiar Fires — Sorcerer Attack 1

Your magical flame flows wherever your familiar points.

Encounter ✦ Arcane, Fire, Implement
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Target: One creature
Attack: Charisma vs. Fortitude
Active Familiar: If your familiar is adjacent to the target, you gain a +4 power bonus to the attack roll.
Hit: 2d10 + Charisma modifier fire damage.

Wave of Light — Sorcerer Attack 1

A wave of multicolored light washes over your enemies, highlighting their weak points.

Encounter ✦ Arcane, Implement, Radiant
Standard Action **Close** blast 3
Active Familiar: You can choose a square in your familiar's space instead of yours as the origin square for this attack.
Target: Each creature in blast
Attack: Charisma vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d6 + Charisma modifier radiant damage, and the target takes a -2 penalty to AC until the end of your next turn.

Level 1 Daily Spell

Chaotic Strike — Sorcerer Attack 1

You close your eyes and release your magic, relying on chaos to guide it.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Implement; Acid or Radiant
Standard Action **Close** burst 1
Target: Each creature in burst
Attack: Charisma vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d10 + Charisma modifier damage, and you can push the target a number of spaces equal to your Dexterity modifier. If you rolled an even number on the attack roll, the damage is acid. If you rolled an odd number on the attack roll, the damage is radiant.
Active Familiar: If the target is adjacent to your familiar, it takes 5 extra damage.
Miss: Half damage.

Level 2 Utility Spell

Spirit Guidance — Sorcerer Utility 2

You allow your magic to flow toward your familiar so that your next attack is more accurate.

Encounter ✦ Arcane
Minor Action **Personal**
Requirement: Your familiar must be in its active mode.
Effect: Until the end of your next turn, you gain a +2 power bonus to attack rolls against any creature adjacent to your familiar.

Level 3 Encounter Spell

Flame Entanglement — Sorcerer Attack 3

Cords of flame leap from your hands and entwine your foe's body.

Encounter ✦ Arcane, Fire, Implement
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Target: One creature
Attack: Charisma vs. Reflex
Active Familiar: If your familiar is adjacent to the target, the target grants combat advantage to you for this attack.
Hit: 2d8 + Charisma modifier fire damage, and the target is slowed until the end of your next turn.
Dragon Magic: This attack ignores fire resistance, but not immunity.

Level 5 Daily Spell

Pinning Darts — Sorcerer Attack 5

Barbs of force fly from your hands, pinning your enemy to the ground.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Force, Implement
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Target: One creature
Attack: Charisma vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d10 + Charisma modifier force damage, and the target is immobilized until the end of your next turn.
Miss: Half damage, and the target is immobilized until the end of your next turn.
Active Familiar: If you rolled an even number on the attack roll, you do not expend this power if you choose to deal no damage.

Level 6 Utility Spell

Protective Familiar Sorcerer Utility 6

Your familiar has a link to your soul. You can protect an ally from damage with your familiar, but you are going to feel it.

Daily ✦ Arcane
Immediate Interrupt
Requirement: Your familiar must be in its active mode.
Trigger: An attack hits an ally you can see
Effect: Your familiar can shift its speed; if it ends this movement adjacent to the triggering ally, the triggering attack hits your familiar instead of the ally. You take damage equal to your level.

Level 7 Encounter Spell

Horror Blast Sorcerer Attack 7

A wave of pure terror emanates from your body and drives your enemies away.

Encounter ✦ Arcane, Implement, Psychic
Standard Action **Close** burst 2
Target: Each enemy in burst
Attack: Charisma vs. Will
Hit: 2d8 + Charisma modifier psychic damage, and you push the target 2 squares.
Active Familiar: Any enemy that is adjacent to your familiar after you push it falls prone.

Level 9 Daily Spell

Flanking Familiar Sorcerer Attack 9

Your familiar attacks one of your enemies, then runs around the battlefield aiding your allies.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Implement
Standard Action **Ranged** 20
Requirement: Your familiar must be in its active mode.
Effect: Until the end of the encounter, your familiar gains a power bonus to all defenses equal to your Charisma modifier. Your familiar can move its speed.
Target: One creature adjacent to your familiar
Attack: Charisma vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d10 + Charisma modifier damage, and your familiar can flank with you and your allies until the end of your next turn.
Sustain Minor: Your familiar can flank with you and your allies until the end of your next turn.

Level 10 Utility Spell

Shielding the Bound Spirit Sorcerer Utility 10

Sometimes your familiar enters combat, and you have to make sure that you protect it.

Daily ✦ Arcane
Minor Action **Ranged** 10
Target: Your familiar
Effect: Your familiar gains a power bonus to all defenses equal to your Charisma modifier and resist 10 to all damage until the end of the encounter.

Level 13 Encounter Spell

Chaos Poison Blast Sorcerer Attack 13

You crack planar boundaries, seeping extraplanar poison into your enemy's body.

Encounter ✦ Arcane, Implement, Poison; Varies
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Target: One creature
Attack: Charisma vs. Fortitude
Active Familiar: If you rolled an even number on the attack roll, the target cannot take opportunity actions until the end of your next turn. If you rolled an odd number on the attack roll, the target is slowed until the end of your next turn.
Hit: 2d10 + Charisma modifier poison damage. If the attack roll was a natural 20, the target is blinded until the end of your next turn.

Level 15 Daily Spell

Opportunistic Familiar Sorcerer Attack 15

Your familiar moves about the field of battle, seeking to take advantage of cracks in your opponent's defenses.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Implement
Minor Action **Ranged** 10
Effect: Until the end of the encounter, your familiar gains hit points equal to your bloodied value, and you can give your familiar the following special commands.
Standard Action: Melee 1; targets one creature; Charisma vs. AC; 2d10 + Charisma modifier damage.
Opportunity Attack: Melee 1; targets one creature; Charisma vs. AC; 1d10 + Charisma modifier damage, and the target takes 5 ongoing damage (save ends).
Minor Action: Your familiar moves up to its speed +2.

Level 16 Utility Spell

Rise, My Pet — Sorcerer Utility 16

Your familiar rises from the dead on the battlefield and is ready to act again.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Teleportation
Minor Action **Personal**
Effect: Your familiar appears in passive mode in your space or in active mode adjacent to you, even if it is destroyed.

Level 17 Encounter Spell

Rolls of Thunder — Sorcerer Attack 17

Spheres of thunder manifest and roll through the air to bowl over your enemies.

Encounter ✦ Arcane, Implement, Thunder
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Target: One or two creatures
Attack: Charisma vs. Will
Hit: 3d10 + Charisma modifier damage, and the target falls prone.
Active Familiar: You can also push the target 3 squares.

Level 19 Daily Spell

Spiritual Venom — Sorcerer Attack 19

Your familiar manifests a stinger and injects your foe.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Implement, Poison
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Requirement: Your familiar must be in its active mode.
Target: One creature adjacent to your familiar
Attack: Charisma vs. Fortitude
Hit: 3d10 + Charisma modifier poison damage, and the target takes ongoing 10 poison damage (save ends).
Miss: Half damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).

Level 22 Utility Spell

Savior Spirit — Sorcerer Utility 22

Your familiar latches onto an ally, then both teleport away.

Encounter ✦ Arcane, Teleportation
Move Action **Close** burst 10
Requirement: Your familiar must be in its active mode.
Target: One ally adjacent to your familiar
Effect: Teleport your familiar and the target 10 squares to squares adjacent to one another. Then, you can teleport your familiar 10 squares.

Level 23 Encounter Spell

Inferno Ring — Sorcerer Attack 23

A ring of fire settles down around your enemy, charring it and its allies.

Encounter ✦ Arcane, Fire, Implement
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Target: One creature
Attack: Charisma vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d10 + Charisma modifier fire damage, and each enemy adjacent to the target takes 1d10 + Charisma modifier fire damage.
Active Familiar: Each enemy adjacent to your familiar takes 1d10 + Charisma modifier fire damage.

Level 25 Daily Spell

Chaotic Spray — Sorcerer Attack 25

Arcs of raw primordial energy lash out from your body, becoming deadlier to those near your familiar.

Daily ✦ Acid, Arcane, Implement, Lightning
Standard Action **Close** burst 2
Target: Each creature in burst
Attack: Charisma vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d10 + Charisma modifier acid and lightning damage, and ongoing 10 acid and lightning damage (save ends).
Miss: Half damage, and ongoing 5 acid and lightning damage (save ends).
Active Familiar: If the target is adjacent to your familiar, it gains vulnerable 5 acid until it saves against the ongoing damage from this power.

Level 27 Encounter Spell

Lightning Backlash — Sorcerer Attack 27

Lightning rips from your fingertips, jumping from creature to creature.

Encounter ✦ Arcane, Implement, Lightning
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Primary Target: One creature
Primary Attack: Charisma vs. Fortitude
Hit: 4d10 + Charisma modifier lightning damage, and make a secondary attack if your familiar is in active mode.
Secondary Target: Each creature adjacent to your familiar
Secondary Attack: Charisma vs. Fortitude
Hit: 1d10 + Charisma modifier lightning damage.
Effect: Your familiar is destroyed.

Level 29 Daily Spell

Necrotic Storm — Sorcerer Attack 29

Black tendrils attack your enemy seemingly out of nowhere, pulling your enemy apart.

Daily Arcane, Implement, Necrotic
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Target: One creature
Attack: Charisma vs. Reflex
Hit: 6d10 + Charisma modifier necrotic damage, and the target is stunned (save ends).
Miss: Half damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).
Active Familiar: When the target saves against this power, you can destroy your familiar as a free action to make the target reroll the saving throw and take the lower result.

About the Author

Arthur Wright is a father of three living in upstate New York. A long time gamer and D&D® player, he has played every incarnation of the D&D game. When he's not playing games or spending time with his family, Arthur is pursuing his dreams of having a work related to the D&D game published, having a D&D book with "Arthur Wright" in the credits, and someday appearing on the show *Survivor*. One down, two to go.

Bazaar of the Bizarre:
The Items of the Drizzt Saga

By Eytan Bernstein

Drizzt illustration by Todd Lockwood ✦ other illustrations by McLean Kendree

A scimitar. Its curving blade was of silver, and diamond edged. Drizzt raised it before him, marveling at its lightness and perfect balance.

"A few baubles . . . and this," he corrected.

–R.A. Salvatore and Drizzt describing Icingdeath, following the battle with the dragon of the same name

Drizzt Do'Urden is one of the most beloved characters in fantasy literature. For many readers, R.A. Salvatore's protagonist has served as an introduction to both the Forgotten Realms® as a game setting and to the fantasy genre in general. Young role-players often seek to emulate Drizzt by playing characters of evil races that defy their upbringing to live lives of virtue—despite the odds.

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The heart of the Drizzt saga is the heroic exploits of the characters—Drizzt, Catti-Brie, Wulfgar, Bruenor, Regis, and eventually others. The characters also possess a number of signature items. They acquired most of these items during their numerous adventures, and these items often play a pivotal role in the plot and in key battles.

As a drow, Drizzt has the longevity to survive the many years that have passed since the events of Spirit Soaring, but not all of his friends were as lucky or as long-lived. In the last 100 years, some of the famed items of the Drizzt saga might have been lost or replicated. The secrets to their creation might be found in ancient, underground dwarven citadels. New adventurers might also best Drizzt in a fight and acquire his famed treasures (see "Campaign Workbook Hero Battle: Drizzt" in *Dungeon* #171).

If you wish to have characters acquire the items, you can check each entry to read a brief history of the item, as well as view statistics for each treasure. Do not consider these items to be standard items that a character can create like any other with the Enchant Magic Item ritual. Each is unique, and you should tie the acquisition, creation, and discovery of each one into your campaign's story. Because these items are more unusual, and sometimes more powerful, than an equivalent item of the same level, they should always be an interesting and exciting addition to the game.

Acquiring Drizzt's Items

Since the time jump from the events of *The Ghost King*, Drizzt has been adventuring throughout the north. We know that he has made relationships with the elves of the Moonwood and even some other reformed drow. He has been interested in the development of the Kingdom of Many-Arrows. Drizzt continues to fight for peace and justice, and this could put him in league with the player characters, but it could also put him at odds with them. If you wish to use Drizzt as an adversary, see "Campaign Workbook Hero Battle: Drizzt" in *Dungeon* #171, which presents plot hooks, encounters, and complete statistics for Drizzt.

During the period following the Spellplague, and leading up to the present Realms, the elves of the Moonwood made a study of magic items, especially weapons. We know that Drizzt gave them *Khazid'hea* to study, feeling that the vicious weapon would be safer in their hands. Perhaps he also allowed them to study his other items. They might have even made copies of some, with the permission of Drizzt.

As for *Khazid'hea*, it's unlikely that the elves would lend out the vicious "Cutter," but the sword is always scheming for a more "worthy" master. Perhaps it drives one of them insane, and that elf releases it back into circulation. It could wind up in the hands of the characters or in a villain's possession.

Rare Items in Your Game

The items known to fans of R.A. Salvatore's books all over the world will recognize the names *Twinkle* and *Guenhwyvar*. For the purpose of characters adventuring in the Realms, where these items are already owned by someone, we've provided less-specific versions of most of these legendary items. The famous versions of each item are provided, but you'll notice that each is a unique take of a more generic item also provided. In this way, your DM can feel free to preserve the special flavor of each of these magic items, while still allowing you to equip your character with a similar version. And if you happen to run into Drizzt and he decides you're a worthy successor, maybe your character will end being the next wielder of *Icingdeath*!

Twinkle

Drizzt Do'Urden is the master of a number of powerful and storied items. Drizzt acquired the scimitar *Twinkle* from Malchor Harpell, the Black Sheep of the eccentric Harpell wizard family. While Drizzt and Wulfgar were on the trail of Regis, who had been kidnapped by Artemis Entreri, they met up with Malchor Harpell in the extraplanar Twilight Tower. After a lesson in discipline for Wulfgar, Malchor gave the pair magic horseshoes to help speed them along their way, and Drizzt received the scimitar *Twinkle*.

Elves forged *Twinkle* centuries before Drizzt's adventures, and they crafted it to emanate a sense of the stars, the moon, and the mysteries of the soul. *Twinkle* trails blue light with each motion and has an extremely keen edge. Drizzt fights with *Twinkle* in his left hand.

Dazzling Weapon — Level 15+

This weapon seems to sparkle with radiant light barely contained within it.

Lvl 15	+3	25,000 gp	Lvl 25	+5	625,000 gp
Lvl 20	+4	125,000 gp	Lvl 30	+6	3,125,000 gp

Weapon: Axe, hammer, heavy blade
Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls
Critical: +1d10 radiant damage per plus
Property: This weapon ignores the first 10 points of radiant resistance.
Power (At-Will ✦ Radiant): Free Action. All damage dealt by this weapon is radiant damage. While this weapon is dealing radiant damage, it also sheds bright light in a 5-square radius. Another free action returns the damage to normal.

Twinkle — Level 25

Its star-cut blue sapphire sparkling with moonlight, Twinkle slices arcs of brilliant energy in air and flesh.

Lvl 25 +5 625,000 gp
(unique; this item cannot be purchased or created with the Enchant Magic Item ritual)
Weapon: Scimitar
Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls
Critical: +1d10 radiant damage per plus
Power (At-Will ✦ Radiant): Free Action. All damage dealt by *Twinkle* is radiant damage. Another free action returns the damage to normal. While the weapon deals radiant damage, it sheds bright light in a 5-square radius.
Power (Encounter ✦ Radiant): Free Action. Use this power when making an attack that targets AC. The attack targets Reflex instead. All damage from the attack is radiant damage.

Icingdeath

After *Guenhwyvar,* this scimitar is probably Drizzt's most well-known item. He acquired it from the plunder of the dragon Ingeloakastimizilian, also known as Icingdeath, and it takes its name from that dragon's nickname. Wulfgar had gone to slay the dragon, and Drizzt followed to keep an eye on him. In a heroic battle, they slew the dragon, acquiring considerable plunder that they later to used to raise an army to defend the Ten Towns against a monstrous force seeking the Crystal Shard.

A wielder of *Icingdeath* can inflict icy wounds on foes and is also protected from the harmful effects of fire. The weapon trails blue radiance and lights the way into danger. Drizzt fights with *Icingdeath* in his right hand.

Chill Wind Weapon — Level 15+

The weapon seems to radiate an aura of cold, glistening like a razor-sharp icicle.

Lvl 15	+3	25,000 gp	Lvl 25	+5	625,000 gp
Lvl 20	+4	125,000 gp	Lvl 30	+6	3,125,000 gp

Weapon: Heavy blade
Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls
Critical: +1d6 cold damage per plus and ongoing 10 cold damage (save ends)
Level 25-30: Ongoing 20 cold damage (save ends).
Property: You gain resist 15 fire.
Level 25-30: Resist 30 fire.
Power (At-Will ✦ Cold): Free Action. All damage dealt by this weapon is cold damage. Another free action returns the damage to normal.

Icingdeath — Level 25

Limned in frost and diamond edged, this silver blade can slice through a steel door.

Lvl 25 +5 625,000 gp
(unique; this item cannot be purchased or created with the Enchant Magic Item ritual))
Weapon: Scimitar
Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls
Critical: +1d6 cold damage per plus and ongoing 10 cold damage (save ends)
Property: You gain resist 30 fire.
Power (At-Will ✦ Cold): Free Action. All damage dealt by *Icingdeath* is cold damage. Another free action returns the damage to normal.
Power (Daily ✦ Cold): Free Action. You can use this power when you hit with the weapon. The target takes 5d8 extra cold damage and is slowed until the end of your next turn.

Guenhwyvar

Guenhwyvar is the most famous treasure of the Drizzt saga, though most people don't think of her as an item at all. *Guenhwyvar*, or Guen as she is often called by Drizzt and the companions, is a figurine of wondrous power: an animate magic panther that resides in the Astral Plane. Drizzt acquired her from the drow wizard Masoj Hunett. Seeing Guen as a sentient being and not just a tool, Drizzt killed Masoj and became a kinder owner for *Guenhwyvar*.

Guen has been with Drizzt in all of his battles and has fought alongside all the companions, flanking their enemies and acting as a stalwart ally. However, she had many owners before Drizzt came across her. The human wizard Anders Beltgard created her more than a thousand years before Drizzt found her, and the elf bladesinger Josidiah Starym named her.

Guenhwyvar **Level 21**

This onyx figurine is a ferocious panther.

Wondrous Item 225,000 gp (unique; this item cannot be purchased or created with the Enchant Magic Item ritual)

Power (Daily ✦ Conjuration): Standard Action. Use this figurine to conjure Guenhwyvar (see below for statistics). As a free action, you can spend a healing surge when activating this item to give the creature temporary hit points equal to your healing surge value.

Special: Guenhwyvar cannot be summoned more than three times a week.

Guenhwyvar
Large natural animate

Initiative as conjurer **Senses** Perception +20; low-light vision and darkvision
HP 50; **Bloodied** 25
AC 35; **Fortitude** 33, **Reflex** 35, **Will** 33
Speed 8, climb 6

⊕ **Claw** (standard, at-will)
+26 vs. Armor Class; 2d8 + 9 damage, and Guenhwyvar shifts 1 square.

⸸ **Bite** (standard; at-will)
Targets a prone creature; +26 vs. AC; 2d10 + 10 damage, and the target is grabbed (until escape).

⸸ **Charging Pounce** (standard; at-will)
When Guenhwyvar charges and hits with her *claw*, she deals 2d8 extra damage and the target falls prone.

Combat Advantage
When Guenhwyvar hits a creature with her *claw* attack and the creature is granting combat advantage to her, the target falls prone.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Understands Common, Elven
Skills Acrobatics +22, Athletics +20, Stealth +22

Str 20 (+15)	**Dex** 24 (+17)	**Wis** 20 (+15)
Con 17 (+13)	**Int** 6 (+8)	**Cha** 10 (+10)

Description: When you activate a figurine, *Guenhwyvar* appears in a space adjacent to you, provided the space is large enough to contain her without squeezing. Guen obeys only you, responding to commands spoken in any language. *Guenhwyvar* remains for up to 8 hours or until you use a minor action to dismiss her. She acts on the same initiative count as you. Every action Guen takes costs you a minor action (which you use to issue commands), and *Guenhwyvar* cannot exceed her normal allotment of actions (a standard, a move, and a minor action) during her turn. If you spend no minor actions on your turn to command *Guenhwyvar*, she remains where she is without taking any actions on her turn.

Guenhwyvar has hit points, defenses, and attacks as indicated in her statistics block. She has no healing surges and cannot be healed, though she can still benefit from temporary hit points. When reduced to 0 hit points or fewer, *Guenhwyvar* disappears and cannot be conjured again until after you've taken an extended rest. *Guenhwyvar* lacks basic attacks and therefore cannot make opportunity attacks.

Khazid-hea

Khazid-hea, also known as "Cutter," is a bloodthirsty, sentient longsword that attempts to drive its wielder into constant battle. Originally wielded by Dantrag Baenre, the weaponmaster of the first house of Menzoberranzan, the sword drove him toward competition with the other male warriors of the City of Spiders, and eventually into conflict with Drizzt, Catti-Brie, and Artemis Entreri. The heroes defeated Dantrag in their flight from Menzoberranzan, and Catti-Brie usurped the blade.

Khazid-hea had an uneasy relationship with Catti-Brie from the start. It was a powerful weapon, but its desire for bloodshed was at odds with Catti-Brie's love of community and peace. Throughout her ownership of the weapon, it always desired to be wielded by Drizzt. When its calls for blood were ignored, it possessed Wulfgar's wife Delly Curtie, forcing her to charge into an orc camp, which led to her death. Both Obould and Tos'un wielded it, but neither found the blade to their liking, feeling discomfited by its domineering influence. Tos'un returned the blade to Drizzt, who eventually donated it to the elves of the Moonwood for study.

Deep Wounding Weapon — Level 10+

This weapon has a thin, serrated blade that punches deeply into an enemy and leaves behind a nasty wound.

Lvl 10	+2	5,000 gp	Lvl 25	+5	625,000 gp
Lvl 15	+3	25,000 gp	Lvl 30	+6	3,125,000 gp
Lvl 20	+4	125,000 gp			

Weapon: Heavy blade
Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls
Critical: +1d12 damage per plus
Power (Daily): Free Action. *Trigger:* You hit an enemy with a melee weapon attack using this weapon. *Effect:* The target takes ongoing 10 damage (save ends). If the triggering attack was made using an extra action gained by using an action point, the target takes a -5 penalty to saving throws against this ongoing damage.

Khazid'hea — Level 25

This thin, sharp longsword bears a stylized unicorn pommel of the goddess Mielikki.

Lvl 25 +5 625,000 gp (unique; this item cannot be purchased or created with the Enchant Magic Item ritual)
Weapon: Longsword
Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls
Critical: +1d12 damage per plus, and ongoing 10 damage (save ends)
Power (Daily): Free Action. *Trigger:* You hit an enemy with a melee weapon attack using *Khazid'hea. Effect:* The target takes ongoing 10 damage (save ends). If the triggering attack was made using an extra action gained by using an action point, the target takes a -5 penalty to saving throws against this ongoing damage.
Communication: Telepathy
Persona: *Khazid'hea* desires constant battle and bloodshed, and it wants to be wielded by the greatest warrior in the world. It is not happy when idle, so it tries to initiate conflict or find a more suitable owner. Sometimes it does this by dominating the wielder into battle; other times, it lures a weaker mind in the hopes that its target will bring it to a location where it can find a better wielder. It cares not whether its wielder harms friend or foe.
Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** –
Skills: Khazid'hea grants a +2 bonus to skill checks related to battle strategy and to intrigue.
Special: Once per tenday, Khazid'hea can try to dominate a wielder that has not slain another creature in battle. It can dominate the wielder if it is dissatisfied. It makes an attack roll against the wielder's Will with a +28 bonus. If the attack succeeds, the sword controls the target's actions and can make the target perform any actions it chooses, including forcing the wielder to use encounter and daily attack powers (save ends).

Dantrag's Bracers

Drizzt defeated the drow weaponmaster Dantrag Baenre when he, Catti-Brie, and Artemis Entreri were escaping Menzoberranzan. From the spoils, he took Dantrag's magic bracers of speed. Dantrag had worn the bracers on his wrists to aid him in his weapon attacks. Drizzt later decided that they would be more useful to him on his feet, and now they provide him with greater speed and agility in battle.

Bracers of Speed — Level 13

These wide bracers are lined with gleaming mithral rings.

Lvl 13 17,000 gp
Item Slot: Arms
Property: You can draw or sheathe a weapon, or draw or stow an item, once per round as a free action.
Power (Daily): Standard Action. Make a melee basic attack against one or two creatures.

Dantrag's Bracers — Level 23

These wide bracers are lined with gleaming mithral rings.

Lvl 18 85,000 gp (unique; this item cannot be purchased or created with the Enchant Magic Item ritual)
Item Slot: Arms or feet
Property: You can draw or sheathe a weapon, or draw or stow an item, once per round as a free action.
Power (Daily): *Requirement:* You must be using *Dantrag's bracers* in the arms slot. Standard Action. Make a melee basic attack against one or two creatures.
Power (Encounter): *Requirement:* You must be using *Dantrag's bracers* in the feet slot. Move Action. Shift a number of squares equal to half your speed.

Acquiring Regis's Ruby Pendant or Jarlaxle's Eye Patch

Jarlaxle had a copy of the *ruby pendant* made while he had the original in his possession. Drizzt, Bruenor, and the rest of the Mithral Hall folk would never have allowed the Calimport underworld (or any other unsavory elements) to regain access to the dangerous pendant, but Jarlaxle is another story altogether. While he holds his items in high esteem, he also plays mysterious games. He might loan the *ruby pendant* out, give it out as a reward, or make more copies if it suits him. Of course, he would keep a copy for himself, but the characters could have several opportunities to get their hands on one (or perhaps on the secret to how to make one at least).

Characters might acquire *Jarlaxle's eye patch* in a similar fashion. Jarlaxle has allowed allies to use it to prevent them from coming under the sway of powerful mental influence, so he might loan it out (or a copy of it) for just that purpose. He also might lend it out in dire circumstances, but be unable to retrieve it, which allows it to get into circulation. As one might expect, Jarlaxle would very much want his favorite item back.

Regis's Ruby Pendant

It's hard to believe that one small stone could cause so much trouble. But that's exactly what happened with the *ruby pendant* that Regis stole from the Pasha Pook. Regis had left his life of thievery in Calimport, but he took the Pasha's ruby, with its powerful hypnotic powers, with him. The *ruby pendant* was responsible for getting the Pook to the top of Calimport's Underground and he was not about to let it go, so he sent assassin Artemis Entreri to recover the halfling and his gem. Regis eventually came to be free of Pook and Entreri, and the pendant became the halfling's most prized possession.

Regis wears the *ruby pendant* on a gold chain around his neck. By dangling it in front of the eyes of another person he can make powerful hypnotic suggestions and create confusion. These suggestions can be short and immediate, or can be complex and last for years.

Regis ultimately met his demise when he attempted to coax Catti-Brie out of her Spellplague-induced prison with the gem. The *ruby pendant* created a pathway that drew Regis into another Realm from which he never returned—until his death.

Hypnotic Pendant **Level 13+**

This pendant has the power to plant hypnotic suggestions in the minds of those around you.

Lvl 13	+3	17,000 gp	Lvl 23	+5	425,000 gp
Lvl 18	+4	85,000 gp	Lvl 28	+6	2,125,000 gp

Item Slot: Neck

Enhancement: Fortitude, Reflex, Will

Power (Daily ✦ Charm): Standard Action. You make the following ranged attack against one creature within 10 squares of you; +16 vs. Will. *Hit:* You designate a specific time or date in the future (for example, noon tomorrow) or a specific event that might occur in the future (for example, when you next see the blacksmith). If the designated time or event occurs before you use this item's power again, the target is dominated by you (save ends). You do not need to be near the target or have line of sight or effect to the target to choose its actions for the purposes of the dominated effect.

Level 18: +21 vs. Will.

Level 23: +26 vs. Will.

Level 28: +29 vs. Will.

Regis's Ruby Pendant — Level 23

This large, glittering pear-shaped ruby hangs from a heavy gold chain.

Lvl 23 +5 425,000 gp (unique; this item cannot be purchased or created with the Enchant Magic Item ritual)
Item Slot: Neck
Enhancement: Fortitude, Reflex, Will
Power (Daily ✦ Charm): Standard Action. You make the following ranged attack against one creature within 10 squares of you; +30 vs. Will. *Hit:* You designate a specific time or date in the future (for example, noon tomorrow) or a specific event that might occur in the future (for example, when you next see the blacksmith). If the designated time or event occurs before you use this item's power again, the target is dominated by you (save ends). You do not need to be near the target or have line of sight or effect to the target to choose its actions for the purposes of the dominated effect.

Jarlaxle's Eye Patch

Jarlaxle has a mercurial and chaotic personality, and his *eye patch* serves as an emblem for his pragmatic, yet whimsical nature. It serves a purely magical purpose—he has both of his eyes and they possess the drow race's normally keen vision. Nevertheless, Jarlaxle wears the patch, constantly shifting it from one eye to the other.

The *eye patch* protects its wearer from mental influence and detection, so those attempting to read the wearer's thoughts or control the wearer find it difficult. This proved extremely important when Jarlaxle and Drizzt attempted to wrest Catti-Brie and Regis from the influence of the uncontrollable blue fire of the Spellplague. Drizzt wore the eye patch to prevent himself from being permanently sucked into the prisons that held Catti-Brie and Regis.

Eye of Watchfulness — Level 17

This eye patch hides potent magic that makes you more perceptive than you appear to be.

Lvl 17 65,000 gp
Item Slot: Head
Property: You can see invisible creatures.
Property: Other creatures take a -10 penalty to skill checks made to use scrying and divination rituals targeting you.

Jarlaxle's Eye Patch — Level 27

This black felt eye patch fits over either eye and does not hinder your vision.

Item Slot: Head 1,625,000 gp (unique; this item cannot be purchased or created with the Enchant Magic Item ritual)
Property: You can see invisible creatures.
Property: Other creatures take a -10 penalty to skill checks made to use scrying and divination rituals targeting you.
Property: Any attack targeting your Will must roll twice on the attack roll and take the worse of the two results.

Acquiring Taulmaril and Aegis Fang

As the weapons of Bruenor's adopted children, these two items hold more importance than any other in Mithral Hall. It's likely that they would only be bestowed upon great heroes or friends of the dwarves. Only characters who fought in a life-or-death battle to save Mithral Hall or went on a quest of the magnitude that discovered the Hall in the first place would be deemed worthy of receiving the weapons.

Taulmaril the Heartseeker and the Quiver of Anariel

Taulmaril is a fabled bow, given to the dwarves of Mithral Hall by the Lady Anariel. The companions discovered it in their exploration of the depths of the Hall as they were creeping away from the shadow dragon Shimmergloom. The bow served both Catti-Brie and later Drizzt quite well, and Drizzt continues to wield it now, even after the events of the Spellplague.

Taulmaril is actually two items because it is paired with the constantly refilling *quiver of Anariel*. It fires powerful arrows of silver energy that drive deep into their target, exploding in sparks that destroy all but the toughest of foes. As the wielder fires the bow, the *quiver* replenishes with more of the silvery arrows, though the source of this ammunition is unknown.

Lightning Strike Bow — Level 10+

This weapon appears to be formed out of a solidified silver bolt of lightning.

Lvl 10	+2	5,000 gp	Lvl 25	+5	625,000 gp
Lvl 15	+3	25,000 gp	Lvl 30	+6	3,125,000 gp
Lvl 20	+4	125,000 gp			

Weapon: Long bow, short bow
Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls
Critical: +1d10 lightning damage per plus and the target falls prone
Property: This weapon deals double damage to objects.
Power (At-Will ✦ Lightning): Free Action. All damage dealt by this weapon is lightning damage. Another free action returns the damage to normal.

Taulmaril the Heartseeker — Level 25

The deep finish of the wood in this bow has not been marred by the ages. Silvery glowing arrows poke out from the top of its matching quiver, waiting to be fired at unwary foes.

Lvl 25 +5 625,000 gp (unique; this item cannot be purchased or created with the Enchant Magic Item ritual)
Weapon: Longbow
Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls
Critical: +1d6 force damage per plus, and the target falls prone
Property: *Taulmaril* and the *quiver of Anariel* cannot remain apart. If the bow is moved more than 6 squares from the other, the *quiver* instantly teleports adjacent to the bow. No amount of force can prevent it from returning to its match.
Property: *Taulmaril* deals double damage to objects.
Power (At-Will ✦ Force, Lightning): Free Action. All damage dealt by Taulmaril is force and lightning damage. Another free action returns the damage to normal.

Aegis Fang

Bruenor Battlehammer was a great smith, and his magnum opus was the powerful warhammer *Aegis Fang*. In the hands of a lesser mortal, the massive warhammer would have been unwieldy, but for the 7-foot-tall barbarian Wulfgar, the adamantine, diamond, and mithral masterpiece was a work of martial art. Bruenor crafted the hammer, and although not a wizard or other spellcaster, he channeled his dwarf heritage to enchant the hammer, bestowing it on his adopted son Wulfgar.

Wulfgar wielded *Aegis Fang* through numerous battles, defeating many a foe with brutal swings and devastating throws. It was more than just a weapon to the big man and his companions. It served as a symbol of their companionship and bond, and they fought to reclaim it when it was lost.

Crashing Weapon — Level 9+

This weapon has a heft to it that makes it seem bulky, yet it flies through the air with incredible speed.

Lvl 9	+2	4,200 gp	Lvl 24	+5	525,000 gp
Lvl 14	+3	21,000 gp	Lvl 29	+6	2,625,000 gp
Lvl 19	+4	105,000 gp			

Weapon: Axe, hammer, pick
Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls
Critical: +1d6 damage per plus and the target is knocked prone
Property: This weapon can be used as a heavy thrown weapon with a range of 5/10.
Power (Daily): Free Action. *Trigger:* You hit with a ranged weapon attack using this weapon. *Effect:* The target and each creature adjacent to the target is knocked prone.

Aegis Fang — Level 19

This massive and magnificently fashioned dwarven warhammer is wrought from mithral, adamantine, and diamond.

Lvl 19 +4 105,000 gp (unique; this item cannot be purchased or created with the Enchant Magic Item ritual)
Weapon: Craghammer
Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls
Critical: +1d12 damage per plus, and the target is knocked prone
Property: *Aegis Fang* can be used as a heavy thrown weapon with a range of 5/10.
Power (Encounter): Free Action. *Trigger:* You hit with a ranged weapon attack using *Aegis Fang*. *Effect:* The target and each creature adjacent to the target is knocked prone.

Acquiring Entreri's Jeweled Dagger

Artemis Entreri was unparalleled in skill, but as a human, his lifespan couldn't hold up to the drow with whom he so frequently associated. Jarlaxle and the other drow of Bregan D'aerthe have long eclipsed Entreri in years. Jarlaxle might have acquired Entreri's *jeweled dagger* later in the assassin's life, though the *dagger* could have passed back into the world in any number of other ways. The *jeweled dagger* doesn't fit with Jarlaxle's personality, thus he most likely has long since parted with it.

Entreri's Jeweled Dagger

Entreri was second to none as an assassin under the employ of the Pasha Pook. Throughout his infamous exploits, Entreri favored a vile vampiric *jeweled dagger* that sucked the life force out of its victims and transferred the energy to the assassin. As their lives ebbed away, victims were wracked with excruciating pain and terrible fear. The mere touch of the blade's cold metal against the skin was enough to induce terror. Entreri is known to have kept Regis in a state of perpetual torment through the use of this *jeweled dagger*.

Vitality Drinking Weapon Level 10+

This finely crafted weapon seems to drink in the light, just as it drinks in the life of your enemies.

Lvl 10	+2	5,000 gp	Lvl 25	+5	625,000 gp
Lvl 15	+3	25,000 gp	Lvl 30	+6	3,125,000 gp
Lvl 20	+4	125,000 gp			

Weapon: Light blade, heavy blade
Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls
Critical: +1d6 necrotic and psychic damage per plus
Property: When you reduce a creature to 0 hit points with an attack using this weapon, you gain 5 temporary hit points
Power (Daily ✦ Healing, Necrotic): Free Action. *Trigger:* You hit an enemy with a melee weapon attack using this weapon. Effect: The target is immobilized and weakened (save ends both).
Level 25-30: The target is immobilized, weakened, and takes ongoing 15 necrotic damage (save ends all). Each time the target takes this necrotic damage, you heal 5 hit points.

Entreri's Jeweled Dagger Level 25

This exquisitely wrought dagger is set with large emeralds.

Lvl 25 +5 625,000 gp (unique; this item cannot be purchased or created with the Enchant Magic Item ritual)
Weapon: Dagger
Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls
Critical: +1d6 necrotic and psychic damage per plus, and you regain 1 healing surge.
Property (Healing): When you reduce a creature to 0 hit points, you regain 5 hit points.
Power (Daily ✦ Healing, Necrotic): Free Action. *Trigger:* You hit an enemy with a melee weapon attack using *Entreri's jeweled dagger*. *Effect:* The target is immobilized, weakened, and takes ongoing 15 necrotic damage (save ends all). Each time the target takes this necrotic damage, you heal 5 hit points.

About the Author

Eytan Bernstein hails from New York City. He spends his days writing and editing history books for a major educational publisher. By night, he works as a game designer, editor, and developer. His many previous credits for Wizards of the Coast include *Adventurer's Vault*™, *Open Grave: Secrets of the Undead*™, and *Arcane Power*™.

Class Acts: Druid

Stepchildren of the Hinterlands

By Ari Marmell
Illustration by Eric Belisle

Other planes "leak" through into the mortal realm. The Feywild overlaps a haunted wood; the Shadowfell bleeds into a grim necropolis. The ravages of a volcanic eruption carry energies and entities of the Elemental Chaos. Such events aren't precisely common, but they're just another trait of the cosmos.

However, in certain select regions of the mortal realm, the walls between worlds are particularly thin. Here, creation itself was left unfinished, or else forces from beyond has damaged them. Here, the fundamental aspects of the world are weakened, influenced, and besieged by these other worlds. From the multiworld archon fortress of Mordram Bek to Firestorm Peak; from the portals of western Nentir Vale to the entirety of the Underdark's depths—these areas, and many more yet undiscovered, have worn ragged where worlds abrade against each other. The influence of other planes is constant, warping the laws of nature and magic, and loosing all manner of horrors.

These regions are still a part of the natural world, however, and the primal spirits still dwell within them and watch over them. Many druidic circles, as well as other primal sects, refer to these regions informally as the Hinterlands. Even druids, shamans, and barbarians who readily deal with the most vicious and fearsome of primal entities often balk at interacting with, or serving, the spirits of these peculiar lands.

Often—but not always.

The primal spirits of the Hinterlands are as harsh as the domains in which they dwell, but they are no less embodiments of the natural world. Those who can steel their nerves to interact with these spirits, and those who come to understand them, realize that the Hinterlands need the spirits, and their primal worshipers, even more than the rest of the world. Because here, as nowhere else, nature must be defended.

Druids who choose to serve or to call upon these spirits are known as "Stepchildren of the Hinterlands." This is an informal designation, not an actual sect; even so, such druids often see one another as kindred spirits, at least until and unless given reason to feel otherwise.

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Hinterland Spirits

The Underdark has its own collection of primal spirits—an entire population of such entities, in fact. The spirits of the other Hinterlands, however, tend not to be widely known, not because they are any weaker than others, but because they are primarily local. That said, a select few Hinterland spirits have achieved as much fame (or notoriety) as some of the more potent spirits such as the World Serpent or Great Bear (see *Primal Power*). A couple of these include the following.

Bitter Eidolon

Most of the Hinterland spirits were preexisting primal spirits that slowly changed as nature around them changed. Bitter Eidolon, however, is said to be the earliest primal spirit to have been "born" (that is, to have first manifested) within the Hinterlands. She, the spirit of what should have been, is of pristine nature from before the touch of other, unnatural worlds. She manifests in a swirl of emotion—primarily sorrow and rage. When she appears visually, it's as a phantasmal image of a single aspect of the terrain—a tree, a hill, occasionally an animal—appearing incorporeal, but otherwise perfect, amid a corrupted region. For the Stepchildren, Bitter Eidolon can either represent their efforts at restoring nature—or at destroying creatures of the other worlds.

Steadfast Henge

Originally a simple spirit of a tangle of briars at the edge of a great forest, Steadfast Henge was supposedly present when, in the days immediately following the Dawn War, the first postwar planar breach encroached upon the world. (Legends differ as to whether the other plane was the Feywild or the Elemental Chaos.) Today, Steadfast Henge manifests in many spots where the worlds overlap and stands against other forces that would encroach upon the natural order. He is the patron spirit of many druids (and other primal characters) who believe that the Hinterlands are just another part of nature and should be accepted as such despite their abnormal traits—but that they must also be kept separate from the world around them, lest they spread their influence too far and disrupt the balance of the world.

New Druid Powers

The following powers can help you implement the Hinterlands in your campaign.

Level 1 At-Will Evocation

Spirit Briar — Druid Attack 1

The phantom thorns of Steadfast Henge gouge the flesh of those who move against them.

At-Will ✦ Implement, Poison, Primal
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Target: One creature
Attack: Wisdom vs. Will
Hit: 1d8 + Wisdom modifier poison damage. Choose either yourself or one ally you can see. If the target ends its next turn adjacent to the chosen creature, it takes poison damage equal to your Dexterity modifier.
Level 21: 2d8 + Wisdom modifier damage.

Level 2 Utility Evocation

All-Encompassing Nature — Druid Utility 2

Your view of nature is broader than most, expanding your knowledge.

Encounter ✦ Primal
Free Action **Personal**
Requirement: You must be trained in Nature.
Trigger: You would make an Arcana, Dungeoneering, or Religion check
Effect: You can roll a Nature check instead.

Level 9 Daily Evocation

Pain from Perseverance — Druid Attack 9

Your wrath carries the spirit of Bitter Eidolon through your foe, transforming its resistance into weakness.

Daily ✦ Implement, Primal, Psychic
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Target: One creature
Attack: Wisdom vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d8 + Wisdom modifier psychic damage.
Effect: Choose one damage type: acid, cold, fire, lightning or thunder. The target loses any resistances to that damage type and gains vulnerable 5 damage to that damage type (save ends both). Until the end of the encounter, your druid attacks can deal damage of the type you chose instead of their normal damage type.

Level 15 Daily Evocation

World-Warp — Druid Attack 15

A ripple in the natural world transports your enemy and protects you from its attack.

Daily ✦ Primal, Teleportation
Immediate Interrupt **Close** burst 10
Trigger: An adjacent enemy makes a melee attack against you
Target: The triggering enemy
Effect: The target and one of your allies within range teleport to switch places. The triggering attack now targets another creature of your choice adjacent to the target. If the triggering attack has no legitimate target, the target's action is lost.

Level 19 Daily Evocation

Thorns of the Hinterlands — Druid Attack 19

All across the field of battle, thickets and brambles rise up to entrap your foes.

Daily ✦ Acid, Conjuration, Implement, Poison, Primal
Standard Action **Area** wall 6 within 20 squares

Effect: You conjure one or two walls of thorny, writhing vines, which cannot have any squares adjacent to each other. Each wall can be up to 4 squares high; it must be on a solid surface, and it lasts until the end of your next turn. The wall provides cover and blocks line of sight.

Entering a wall square costs 2 extra squares of movement. If a creature enters the wall's space or starts its turn there, that creature takes 1d10 + your Wisdom modifier acid and poison damage and ongoing 5 acid and poison damage (save ends).

Sustain Minor: The walls persist.

Level 23 Encounter Evocation

Fungal Eruption — Druid Attack 23

The Deep Winds blow from below, spreading fungus and mold through your enemy's flesh.

Encounter ✦ Implement, Poison, Primal, Zone
Standard Action **Area** burst 1 within 10 squares
Target: Each creature in burst
Attack: Wisdom vs. Fortitude

Hit: 2d6 + Wisdom modifier poison damage, and the target is weakened and takes a -2 to all defenses and to Perception checks (save ends both).

Effect: The burst creates a zone that lasts until the end of your next turn. Any creature that enters or starts its turn within the zone is slowed until the start of its next turn. (This effect has the poison keyword.)

Level 25 Daily Evocation

Writhing Henge — Druid Attack 25

The limbs of Steadfast Henge protrude from the earth, flinging and rending at your command.

Daily ✦ Implement, Primal, Summoning
Standard Action **Close** burst 10

Effect: You summon up to six Medium briar-covered tendrils in unoccupied squares within range, no two of which can be adjacent to the same creature. The tendrils have a speed of 0 and are immune to being pushed, pulled, or slid. You lose a healing surge only when all the tendrils have been destroyed. You can give the tendril the following special command. On the turn you summon the tendrils, you give that command as a part of using this power.

Standard Action: Each tendril summoned by this power makes an attack; melee 2; targets one creature; Wisdom vs. Reflex; 2d8 + Wisdom modifier damage plus ongoing 5 damage (save ends), and you slide the target 3 squares.

Instinctive Effect: If you haven't given the tendrils any commands by the end of your turn, each one attacks an enemy within 2 squares of it if it can. Otherwise, the tendril slides one of your allies within 2 squares of it up to 3 squares.

About the Author

Ari Marmell was born in New York, moved to Houston when he was a year old, moved to Austin when he was 27, but has spent most of his life living in other worlds through a combination of writing and roleplaying games. He has been writing more or less constantly for the last dozen years, though he has only been paid for it the past five. He is the author of multiple roleplaying game supplements including work on Dungeons & Dragons®. Ari lives in Austin with his wife George and two cats. Visit him online at his Dungeons & Dragons blog page, at his website, on Twitter, or at his Facebook fan page.

Class Acts: Clerics of Prophecy

By David Adams
Illustration by Eric Belisle

Typically aloof and preoccupied with their own cosmic, unfathomable agendas, deities rarely communicate directly with their mortal followers. On occasion, however, they attempt to intervene in the affairs of the world, and when they choose to do so, the nature of their minds, the power of their thoughts, and their own whimsy often forces them to rely on other forms of communication. In addition, numerous complex, nearly incomprehensible agreements between individual deities, as well as between other powers, often prohibit the deities from acting or communicating directly with their followers. And finally, exposing their plans directly often leads to exploitations by their fiercest rivals. As a result, deities can choose to work through mortal prophets to communicate their will to the world. Only the most devout servants of the gods have the patience and tenacity of will to serve in such a capacity. The gods use these mortal servants to pursue and advance their diverse goals and agendas. Bane might attempt to spur his followers to war, Vecna might desire that certain heroes be mislead so that his secrets are kept, Corellon might wish to inspire new works of magic in the world, Sehanine might want to play games with the lives of mortals, and all of the deities have plans that they conspire to keep hidden from their adversaries.

Prophetic servants share a watchful, pensive disposition, whether or not they have clung to their sanity through exposure to the source of their divine inspiration. With divinely inspired insight, they attempt to discern messages in mundane occurrences. A dream of ravens might presage the death of a family member. The alignment of stars might foretell an auspicious birth. Windblown leaves might warn of an impending conflict. These signs arise without warning, often come unbidden, and are frequently part of some greater missive. Sharing and analyzing these signs and portents in the context of an organized group increases the likelihood that the faithful can discern the significance of these events.

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The Haruspex Assembly

The Haruspex Assembly is one of the most active groups that focus on prophecy. Coming from a variety of faiths, the members of the Assembly form a loose network of agents who travel the world and beyond in search of divine omens. Most believe that deities reveal the destiny of the world through visions, signs, and other portents. They contend that the original design the gods had intended for the planes of existence was one most favorable for mortals. Thus, discovering their intentions for the future is the only way to ensure the preservation of the mortal realm. However, the various aims that the gods have for their prophets makes it difficult to separate trivial omens from the auspicious ones, the treacherous from the true. As a result, many members develop a hardened pragmatism and cautious cynicism even as the gravity of their lofty ambitions drives them forward.

Ansis Belriah is recognized by many within the Haruspex Assembly as their leader. This deva priest of Ioun attempts to coordinate the disparate discoveries of the Assembly's operatives to understand the looming peril facing the world. He believes that the most significant prophecies concerning the growing threat to the world originate from whatever mysteries Ioun bore witness to when she looked through the Living Gate. As a result, Ansis suspects that, as some scholars have suggested, the greatest danger to the continuity of the mortal realms exists within the Far Realm. He also has a pronounced interest in those who have developed psionic talents, speculating that the existence of these individuals is another manifestation of divine providence and that their abilities are the only weapon capable of thwarting any future incursions.

Although not every operative of the Haruspex Assembly shares Ansis's particular outlook, the deva is nonetheless a respected authority on interpreting prophetic events. He has spent many of his countless lifetimes drawn to serve the gods as an instrument of prophecy. Much of the knowledge he garnered has gone missing since his personal library in Shavost was lost in the fall of Nerath. Though much is forgotten, Ansis still has great insight and has connected many of the disparate strands of prophecy while members of the Assembly look for some sign of Shavost and the lost library. It is through this activity that many adventurers come into contact with the Haruspex Assembly.

Currently, the Assembly lacks a centralized headquarters. Several operatives have settled in Nentir Vale and its surrounding environs. Like members elsewhere, the oracular gifts they possess are viewed superstitiously by most commoners. The more brazen among the populace occasionally seek out members of the Assembly and request blessings or ask to have their own futures divined. Those operatives willing to indulge these requests often carry astragali, which are carved sheep knuckle bones, and they ritually toss them to glean insight into individual futures. In return for these secret favors, most local populations provide the Assembly with whatever resources they can as the Assembly pursues its agenda.

The Haruspex Assembly in Eberron

In Eberron, the Haruspex Assembly focuses on understanding the Draconic Prophecy and how the gods are attempting to use it to instruct and warn their followers. Ansis Belriah had kept his library in Kalazart in Cyre, and since the Mourning, the Assembly has become more active in promoting awareness of the prophecy. This makes them one of the most accessible organizations for those looking to find more detailed information about the Draconic Prophecy. The size of their network of agents limits the quantity and quality of the information they have available, but they are seldom hesitant to share. Ansis Belriah and much of his work on the nature of the Draconic Prophecy was lost during the events of the Mourning, and although many of the Assembly have continued their work as before, others attempt to recover the remains of Ansis's library or have taken up residence in New Cyre, awaiting the return of the deva who was once their leader. The Brelish crown is suspicious of the Haruspex Assembly's motives and keeps detailed dossiers on members and their activities within New Cyre.

The interests of the Haruspex Assembly also make them an organization likely to harbor those who bear aberrant dragonmarks or any dragonmarked characters attempting to escape the influence of the Houses. They often attempt to exploit these individuals for the furtherance of their understanding of the Draconic Prophecy or coerce them into fulfilling prophecies that they believe can help preserve the status quo and ensure the continued existence of the mortal world. The Assembly is far from being malicious, but those bearing dragonmarks are not entirely safe when working with or on behalf of the organization.

Background

The following background can provide your character with a tie to prophecy.

Prophetic Sanctification: You have preternatural insight that frequently leads you to find omens in events that seem mere happenstance to others. The event that revealed this ability to you forever changed the course of your life. Perhaps in the middle of debilitating illness you began babbling in Supernal before miraculously being healed. During your investiture you might have been struck by visions that appeared to last for days in which you spoke with an avatar of your deity. You might have witnessed portents during a short walk through the wilderness, only to return home and discover you had been gone for a week while the events that were foretold during your journey come to pass. Regardless of how you awakened to your gifts, you have now become an instrument of prophecy. Do you find it onerous to interpret the signs given to you by your god or is it obvious to you what events are truly prophetic and which are merely coincidence? Is this ability a boon or would you rather be rid of the capability?

Associated Skills: Insight, Perception

New Cleric Powers

Many clerics turn their prophetic abilities against their enemies by relying upon the assistance of the gods to provide them with the insight to turn their enemies' ill-fortune against them, prevent allies from coming to harm, or alter fate so that it is easier for their attacks to strike true.

Level 1 Encounter Prayer

Prophetic Guidance — Cleric Attack 1

A glimpse into your enemy's future allows you to guide your allies' attacks with incredible precision.

Encounter ✦ Divine
Standard Action **Ranged** 5
Target: One enemy
Effect: The target grants combat advantage until the end of your next turn, and your allies gain a power bonus to damage rolls against the target equal to your Wisdom modifier until the end of your next turn. The next ally who misses the target before the end of your next turn can reroll the attack.

Level 5 Daily Prayer

Sundered Fortune — Cleric Attack 5

Your prayer disconnects your enemies from their good fortune, and each success they have now brings them misery.

Daily ✦ Divine, Implement
Standard Action **Area** burst 1 within 5 squares
Target: Each enemy in burst
Attack: Wisdom vs. Will
Hit: The target is subjected to sundered fortune (save ends). While under the effect of a sundered fortune, the target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls and takes damage equal to 5 + your Wisdom modifier each time it hits with an attack or succeeds at a saving throw (including the save against this power).
Effect: The target grants combat advantage until the end of your next turn.

Level 10 Utility Prayer

Prophetic Protection — Cleric Utility 10

The enemy's success is undone as you manipulate fate to protect yourself or an ally.

Encounter ✦ Divine
Immediate Interrupt **Close** burst 5
Trigger: An enemy in burst scores a critical hit with an attack against you or an ally
Effect: The triggering enemy must re-roll the attack with a penalty to the attack roll equal to your Charisma modifier.

Level 13 Encounter Prayer

Ominous Portent — Cleric Attack 13

You prophesize that your enemy's failure will continue to be its destiny.

Encounter ✦ Divine, Implement, Psychic
Immediate Reaction **Ranged** 5
Trigger: An enemy within 5 squares of you misses with an attack
Target: The triggering enemy
Attack: Wisdom vs. Will
Hit: 2d8 + Wisdom modifier psychic damage. The target grants combat advantage and takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls until the end of its next turn.

Level 15 Daily Prayer

Ruinous Kismet — Cleric Attack 15

A glimpse of the future reveals the demise of your enemy, and now fate will not allow it to escape.

Daily ✦ Divine, Implement
Standard Action **Area** burst 1 within 5 squares
Target: Each enemy in burst
Attack: Wisdom vs. Will
Hit: 2d6 + Wisdom modifier damage, and the target takes a -2 penalty to all defenses (save ends).
Effect: Until the end of the encounter, the target takes damage equal to 5 + your Charisma modifier the first time each turn any of your allies misses it with an attack.

Level 17 Encounter Prayer

Prescient Boon — Cleric Attack 17

You manipulate fate so that you and your allies become the rewarded instruments of prophecy for a time.

Encounter ✦ Divine, Implement
Standard Action **Ranged** 5
Target: One enemy
Attack: Wisdom vs. Will
Hit: Until the end of your next turn, each of your allies can roll twice on the first attack he or she makes on his or her turn against the target. If both attack rolls hit, the target takes extra damage equal to 5 + your Charisma modifier.

Level 22 Utility Prayer

Prophetic Fervor — Cleric Utility 22

Visions of imminent battle swim in your mind, and you invigorate your allies to prepare them for what is to come.

Daily ✦ Divine
No Action **Close** burst 5
Trigger: You roll initiative
Target: You and each ally in burst
Effect: Each target gains a +2 bonus to the initiative check and temporary hit points equal to 10 + your Charisma modifier.

Level 27 Encounter Prayer

Auspicious Foresight — Cleric Attack 27

The signs reveal an opportunity for you to undo the failure of an ally.

Encounter ✦ Divine, Implement
Immediate Reaction **Ranged** 5
Trigger: An ally misses a target
Target: The triggering target creature
Attack: Wisdom vs. Will
Hit: 2d8 + Charisma modifier damage. The target takes a -2 penalty to all defenses until the end of your next turn, and the ally can reroll the attack against the target.

About the Author

David Adams has been playing Dungeons & Dragons for nearly ten years. During this time he has manage to obtain a bachelor's degree in biology and bathe regularly. This is his first article, the result of maddening visions imparted to him by the dark, forgotten gods he serves within the secluded primeval wilderness of eastern Kentucky.

Class Acts: Warden

The Coterie of the All Spirit

By Craig A. Campbell
Illustration by Eric Belisle

Barbarians, shamans, and druids have long communed with primal spirits in an effort to protect the natural world. Some, however, take this mission a step further. These individuals are not content to guard a single sacred grove or patrol one unblemished tundra. They instead believe in a great interconnectedness among all parts of the natural world and strive to strengthen their ties to the spirits that give them their power so that they might stand strong against all danger. Adventurers and other individuals of many primal stripes share this belief, but some of the most dedicated among them are wardens who become members of the Coterie of the All-Spirit.

The All-Spirit

Members of the Coterie of the All-Spirit see the whole of creation as one great, all-encompassing organism—more so than other primal characters do. To them, the world is not just an amalgamation of animals, plants, weather, and physicality. Rather, it is a complex association of primal spirits that constantly feed on, influence, and strengthen each other.

They believe that the sun spirit and storm spirits of the world feed the earth, causing vegetation to grow and flourish. Animals consume this vegetation, and it strengthens them and allows them to pass along this spiritual essence to those creatures that prey upon them, creating a circle of life that connects each organism to another. Members of the coterie call this circle, and everything within it, the All-Spirit, a driving force that they must protect at all costs. To them, the All-Spirit the core truth of the world in which they live— it is a greater spirit unto itself.

The Coterie of the All-Spirit

The Coterie of the All-Spirit is a loose organization of wardens who seek to better understand the source of their power by communing with the All-Spirit on a regular basis. Like all wardens, coterie members typically make contact with their spirit-patrons only when they take on a guardian form. Members of the coterie, however, constantly seek methods by which they might commune with the All-Spirit in a more direct way, so as to strengthen their understanding of the world as a whole and better serve as the guardians of nature. This impetus begins early in a warden's career and continues throughout his or her other service to the All-Spirit.

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Learning of the Coterie

Typically, wardens learn of the coterie by glimpsing the All-Spirit while in a guardian form. Some catch a glimpse while in battle in a guardian form. Others might see it while perfecting their understanding of the guardian form. Still others experience the All-Spirit while dreaming. In this latter case, the warden awakens from sleep having subconsciously transformed into a guardian form.

With this glimpse of the All-Spirit comes a deep-seated understanding that others have shared these visions. Once a warden glimpses the greater primal power, he or she is compelled to discover the coterie. Current coterie members who are near a warden who is beginning his or her path become aware that another has been called and actively seek to bring the new initiate into the fold.

Initiation

To become a member of the coterie, an initiate undergoes a week-long trial that stresses the body and prepares the initiate for his or her future path. Each initiate travels into the wilderness, carrying only a small knife and a lit torch, and begins a week-long fast while he or she mediates on the nature of the All-Spirit. During this time, he or she builds a sweat lodge, but sleeps outside it. On the final day of the fast, the initiate lights a fire in the sweat lodge and sits down within its walls. There, hunger, stress, and smoke propel him or her into a trance within which he or she communes with the All-Spirit. After the trance ends, the initiate disassembles the spirit lodge, hunts a small animal, and ends his or her fast, now a full member of the coterie.

The Three-Fold Oath

Members of the Coterie of the All-Spirit hold three tenets of faith dear to their hearts. These tenets are referred to collectively as the Three-Fold Oath. When a warden becomes a member of the coterie, each warden joins his or her spirit with that of the All-Spirit and takes the oath.

The Tenet of Seeking: Seek greater personal understanding of the All-Spirit to bring all nature into harmony and better ally yourself with those who serve the All-Spirit.

The Tenet of Opposition: Oppose the intentions of the Impure in all its forms, even if it leads to your death.

The Tenet of Communion: Bring understanding of the All-Spirit to all in need.

Day-to-Day Life in the Coterie

To uphold their tenets, coterie members actively seek out intelligent denizens of the world who are in need of guidance so that they can bring understanding of the All-Spirit to them. As a result, they travel frequently and stay in one location only as long as they are needed. Their journeys help them remain tolerant of other races as they seek a way for their words and deeds to live on in the descendants of those whom they contact. While traveling and assisting others, members might also face the Impure from time to time, as well.

Additionally, though coterie members ally themselves with the All-Spirit, they don't ignore the individual, simpler spirits of the world. Rather, they revel in these basic primal spirits. They walk in the middle of lightning storms, call to animals, tend crops, and embrace the earth when it rumbles beneath their feet. Also, they feel a greater connection with the primal spirits whose form they can take, since they view these forms as an important part of the whole they revere. Recognizing these basic spirits furthers their overall understanding of the All-Spirit.

In general, though, each member faces different challenges while upholding the tenets. Because the coterie recognizes that members have varying experiences, they come together upon occasion to share knowledge and better themselves through the wisdom others gain from their journeys. These get-togethers are called spirit moots.

Spirit Moots

A spirit moot is a meeting of coterie members in a special spirit realm called the Three-Fold Grove. The grove is a realm of peace and tranquility, and it appears as a small copse of vibrant trees in the middle of a vast field.

An elder coterie member calls a spirit moot by using a secret ritual. Once he or she performs the ritual, coterie members the world-over hear the call in the back of their minds and decide whether they wish to attend. Attendance is a simple matter of a member finding a quiet place to sit and voluntarily enter a trance that propels their spirit to the Three-Fold Grove.

During a spirit moot, attendees meet, exchange stories, commune with the All-Spirit, and discuss coterie business. Spirit moots occur once per month, but an elder can invoke them more often in times of great need.

Holy Days

Members of the coterie hold four days as holy.

The Festival of the Bleak Hand: On the winter solstice, members voluntarily forgo using guardian forms in an effort to better appreciate the power the spirits grant them.

The Festival of the Bright Hand: On the summer solstice, all members of the coterie engage in a grand spirit moot where they exchange knowledge, revel in their successes, and lament their failures.

The Festivals of the Balanced Hands: On the spring and fall equinoxes, members spend the day helping others. They might help plant or harvest crops, teach locals how to deal with natural disasters, or train locals to fight nearby beast or humanoid threats.

On any of these holy days, when multiple members of the coterie gather together in the same place, they engage in a feast called the Unity of the All-Spirit, where they break bread and revel in their shared calling personally.

The Pure and the Impure

Members of the Coterie of the All-Spirit view those who worship other powers as falling into two camps: the Pure and the Impure.

The Pure

Those who espouse good intentions or otherwise seek a balance in the world are referred to as the Pure. For the most part, the gods presented in the *Player's Handbook* fall into this category, since their intentions coincide with the intentions of the All-Spirit.

The Impure

Those who seek darkness or destruction oppose the intentions of the All-Spirit. Evil gods fall into this category and the coterie consider them to be Impure. Additionally, members of the coterie deem those who serve primordial cults and demon princes as being part of the Impure. Members of the coterie combat the Impure as part of the second tenet of the Three-Fold Oath they undertake.

Scion of the All-Spirit

"The All-Spirit fills me with understanding of all things. I will now teach you about these things."

Prerequisite: Warden

Although many wardens acknowledge the All-Spirit in name, you welcome the All-Spirit into the very core of your being, transforming yourself into the strong right hand of the All-Spirit and seeking to bring the truth of the All-Spirit to bear in everything you do.

Becoming a scion of the All-Spirit is a transformative experience that shapes you in myriad ways. You shrug off the seemingly inconsequential minutiae of your mortal existence in favor of embracing the greater spirit that subsumes all creation. Although you still exist in corporeal form, you develop a spiritual communion with the All-Spirit that reshapes your essence and combines your soul with the greatest primal spirit. You are a pure representative of the All-Spirit, seeking to protect the natural world by channeling the power you have been granted by the All-Spirit.

Scion of the All-Spirit Path Features

All-Spirit Action (11th level): When you spend an action point to take an extra action, you become insubstantial and gain phasing until the end of your next turn.

All-Spirit Strike (11th level): Whenever you score a critical hit, your damage ignores all the target's resistances, including insubstantial.

Share the All-Spirit (16th level): Whenever you spend a healing surge, one ally within 5 squares of you makes a saving throw with a bonus equal to your Constitution modifier.

Scion of the All-Spirit Powers

Voice of the All-Spirit — Scion of the All-Spirit Attack 11

Your attack resonates with the voice of the All-Spirit, rendering your foes prone for future attacks.

Encounter **Primal, Thunder, Weapon**
Standard Action **Close** burst 2
Target: Each enemy in burst
Attack: Strength vs. Fortitude
Hit: 1[W] + Strength modifier thunder damage, and the target falls prone. The target is deafened and marked until the end of your next turn.

All-Spirit Step — Scion of the All-Spirit Utility 12

The All-Spirit beckons to your enemies as you slip out of trouble.

Encounter **Primal, Teleportation**
Move Action **Personal**
Effect: You mark each enemy adjacent to you and then teleport your speed. You must end this teleport adjacent to at least one enemy you marked with this power.

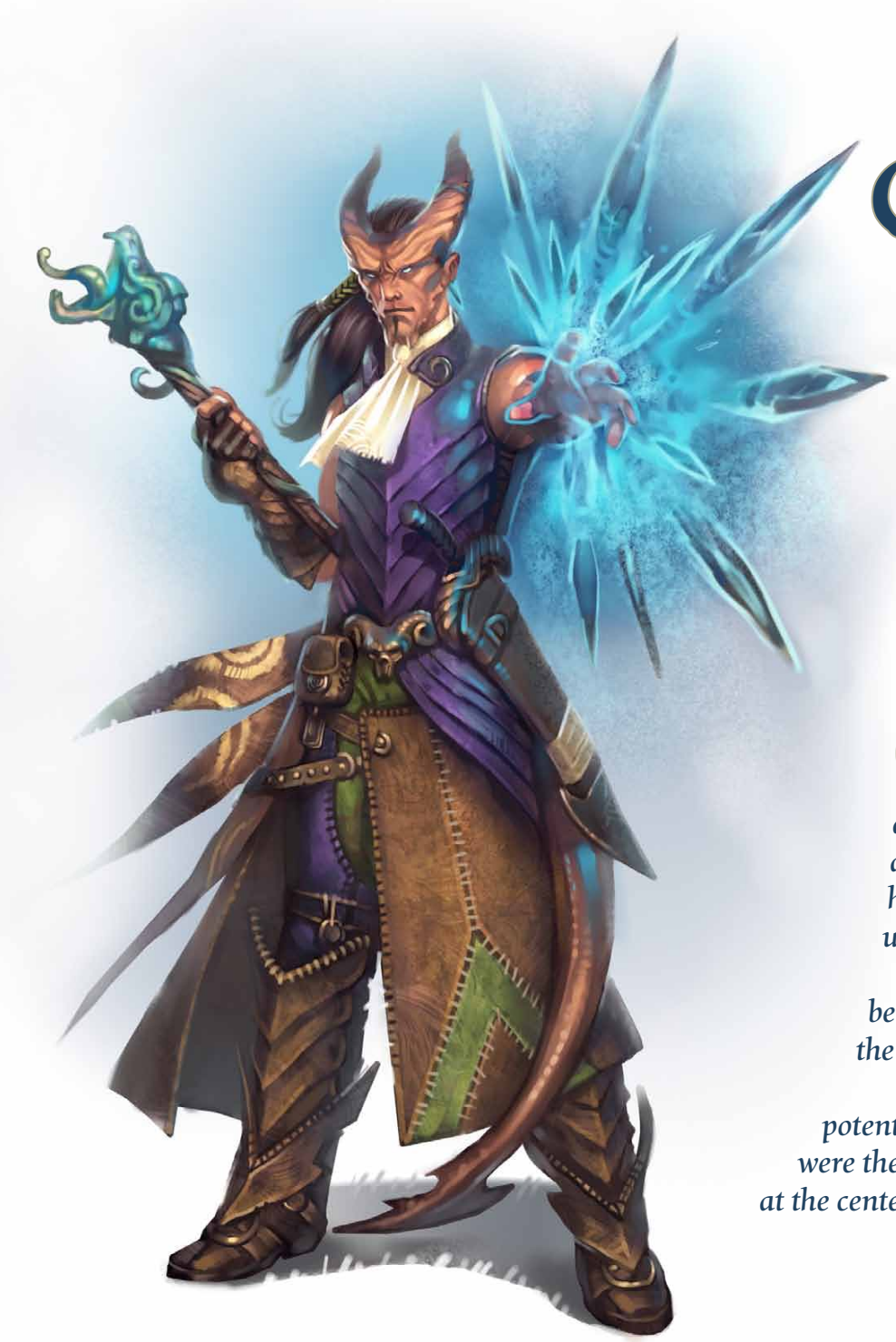
Form of the All-Spirit — Scion of the All-Spirit Attack 20

Your body becomes a miasma of primal spirits encompassing animal, plant, weather, and elemental aspects in equal parts. Your new form reaches out to your allies and strikes at your foes.

Daily **Polymorph, Primal**
Minor Action **Personal**
Effect: You assume the guardian form of the All-Spirit until the end of the encounter. While you are in this form, you gain a +1 power bonus to all defenses. In addition, you and each ally adjacent to you gain resist 5 to all damage.
Once during this encounter, you can make the following weapon attack while you are in this form.
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Effect: Before the attack, you teleport your speed.
Target: One creature
Attack: Strength vs. Will
Hit: 2[W] + Strength modifier damage, and the target is dominated until the end of your next turn.
Miss: Half damage, and the target is dazed until the end of your next turn.

About the Author

Craig Campbell was suckered into playing D&D® in 1990 when some of his college friends told him he needed to get out less. In the time since, he's devoured many sourcebooks, transforming himself into a zombielike creature that constantly seeks to tell amazing stories and eat the brains of his players. Hailing from northeastern Wisconsin (go Packers!), he currently lives in Marietta, Georgia with his all-consuming love of bad movies.



Class Acts:
Dealers in Deviltry:
Crimson Knights of Bael Turath

By Mike Mearls
Illustration by Eric Belisle

Centuries ago, the folk of Bael Turath struck a bargain with Asmodeus. They became the first tieflings, and in the name of the Nine Hells they conquered lands far and wide. Today, their empire is a warning to those who would deal with the infernal powers. Yet, at the time of the empire's height many believed that the lords of Bael Turath had done the unthinkable in outwitting Asmodeus.

To this day, some folk believe that Bael Turath fell only because of Arkhosia's overwhelming might, a power that not even the Prince of Hell could overcome with the boons he offered.

The Crimson Knights stood as one of Bael Turath's most potent weapons. A cadre of paladins and warlocks, these crusaders were the cutting edge of the empire's war machine. Their power rested at the center of the compact between Asmodeus and Bael Turath.

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New Warlock Spells

As part of the bargain, Asmodeus compelled each of the other eight lords of Hell to impart one secret of their magic to the warlocks of Bael Turath.

The lords of Hell, loathe to surrender an iota of their might to mortals, attached a price to their spells. The spell's destructive power required a sacrifice, either from the warlock or from the spell's victim. The grasping, hungry nature of these spells makes them more likely to harm a target, but this benefit comes at the price of the warlock's life force.

Infernal Pact: A warlock who chooses the infernal pact can choose to gain *gift to Avernus* instead of *hellish rebuke*.

Level 1 At-Will Spell

Gift to Avernus — Warlock Attack 1

You lash forth with a crackling ray of arcane power. As the beam rips into your foe's flesh, you release part of your life force to ensure that this hellish bolt carries a portion of your foe's with it.

At-Will ✦ Arcane, Implement
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Target: One creature
Attack: Charisma vs. Reflex
Hit: 1d10 + Charisma modifier damage.
Level 21: 2d10 + Charisma modifier.
Miss: You can choose to take damage equal to your level to reroll the attack roll. You can choose this only once each time you use this attack.

Level 1 Encounter Spell

Grasp of the Iron Tower — Warlock Attack 1

A hand of iron appears around your foe and crushes it with the sickening sound of popping bones and grinding flesh.

Encounter ✦ Arcane, Implement
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Primary Target: One creature
Primary Attack: Charisma vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d10 + Charisma modifier damage, and the primary target cannot willingly move closer to you until the end of your next turn.
Infernal Pact: You gain resist to all damage equal to 2 + your Intelligence modifier until the end of your next turn.
Miss: You take damage equal to your level but can make a secondary attack.
Secondary Target: One creature other than the primary target
Secondary Attack: Charisma vs. Fortitude
Hit: One-half of 2d10 + Charisma modifier damage, and the secondary target cannot willingly move closer to you until the end of your next turn.

Level 3 Encounter Spell

Lure of Minauros — Warlock Attack 3

You whisper dark promises on the wind, sending them forth to pollute your enemy's mind with overwhelming terror that compels it to lash out in a panic.

Encounter ✦ Arcane, Fear, Implement, Psychic
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Primary Target: One creature
Primary Attack: Charisma vs. Will
Hit: 1d10 + Charisma modifier psychic damage, and the primary target takes a free action to make a melee basic attack against itself or an adjacent creature.
Infernal Pact: Until the end of your next turn, whenever an enemy attacks you, each other enemy adjacent to you takes psychic damage equal to your Charisma modifier.
Miss: You take damage equal to your level but can make a secondary attack.
Secondary Target: One creature other than the primary target
Secondary Attack: Charisma vs. Will
Hit: One-half of 1d10 + Charisma modifier psychic damage, and the secondary target takes a free action to make a melee basic attack against a creature of your choice (including itself) that is adjacent to it; the secondary target's attack deals half damage.

Level 7 Encounter Spell

Pain to Pleasure — Warlock Attack 7

You unleash the dark magic of Belial, drawing strength and pleasure from your enemy's tormented screams.

Encounter ✦ Arcane, Fire, Healing, Implement
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Primary Target: One creature
Primary Attack: Charisma vs. Reflex. Make two attack rolls. If either of them hits, resolve them as a single hit, and both of them must miss for the attack to miss.
Hit: 1d10 + Charisma modifier fire damage if one attack roll hits, or 2d10 + Charisma modifier fire damage if two hit. If at least one attack roll hits, you regain hit points equal to your Intelligence modifier.
Infernal Pact: You regain additional hit points equal to your Charisma modifier.
Miss: You take damage equal to your level but can make a secondary attack.
Secondary Target: One creature other than the primary target
Secondary Attack: Charisma vs. Reflex. Make two attack rolls. If either of them hits, resolve them as a single hit, and both of them must miss for the attack to miss.
Hit: One-half of 1d10 + Charisma modifier fire damage if one attack roll hits, or 2d10 + Charisma modifier fire damage if two hit. If at least one attack roll hits, you regain hit points equal to your Intelligence modifier.

Level 13 Encounter Spell

Ice Blades of Levistus — Warlock Attack 13

You hurl a storm of ice shards at your foe while invoking the dark challenge of Levistus. The target must fight you, but like Levistus you do not believe in fighting on fair terms.

Encounter ✦ Arcane, Cold, Implement
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Primary Target: One creature
Primary Attack: Charisma vs. Will
Hit: 2d10 + Charisma modifier cold damage. In addition, you mark the target and immobilize it until the end of your next turn.
Infernal Pact: If the target makes an attack that does not include you as a target before the end of your next turn, it takes 2d10 + your Charisma modifier cold damage.
Miss: You take damage equal to your level but can make a secondary attack.
Secondary Target: One creature other than the primary target
Secondary Attack: Charisma vs. Will
Hit: One-half of 2d10 + Charisma modifier cold damage. In addition, you mark the target and slow it until the end of your next turn.

Level 17 Encounter Spell

Dire Portents of Malbolge — Warlock Attack 17

Your foe shrieks in terror as, in its mind, horrid growths erupt across its body. It hacks away at them, heedless of the horrible injuries it inflicts upon itself.

Encounter ✦ Arcane, Fear, Implement
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Primary Target: One creature
Primary Attack: Charisma vs. Will
Hit: 3d10 + Charisma modifier damage, and the primary target is dazed until the start of its next turn.
Infernal Pact: You can slide each enemy within 2 squares of the primary target a number of squares equal to your Intelligence modifier to a square more than 2 squares from the primary target.
Miss: You take damage equal to your level but can make a secondary attack.
Secondary Target: One creature other than the primary target
Secondary Attack: Charisma vs. Will
Hit: One-half of 3d10 + Charisma modifier damage, and the secondary target is dazed until the start of its next turn.

Level 23 Encounter Spell

Web of Lies — Warlock Attack 23

You weave a skein of lies worthy of Baalzebul around your enemy, turning friend to foe as it lashes out in a blind panic

Encounter ✦ Arcane, Fear, Implement, Psychic, Zone
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Primary Target: One creature
Primary Attack: Charisma vs. Will

Hit: 4d10 + Charisma modifier psychic damage, and you create a zone that lasts until the end of your next turn. The zone fills the primary target's space and all squares adjacent to it. The primary target cannot willingly leave the zone, and it can make attacks only against creatures within the zone.

Infernal Pact: If the primary target does not attack during its next turn, it takes psychic damage equal to 15 + your Intelligence modifier.

Miss: You take damage equal to your level but can make a secondary attack.

Secondary Target: One creature other than the primary target

Secondary Attack: Charisma vs. Will

Hit: One-half of 4d10 + Charisma modifier psychic damage, and you create a zone that lasts until the end of your next turn. The zone fills the secondary target's space and all squares adjacent to it. The secondary target cannot willingly leave the zone, and it can make attacks only against creatures within the zone.

Level 27 Encounter Spell

Hellfire Fury — Warlock Attack 27

You unleash the fires of Mephistopheles. They will not be sated until they have charred your enemy's flesh. Failing that, your ally's flesh will do.

Encounter ✦ Arcane, Fire, Implement
Standard Action **Ranged** 20
Target: One creature
Attack: Charisma vs. Reflex

Hit: 4d10 + Charisma modifier fire damage.

Infernal Pact: You gain a power bonus to your next attack roll against the target equal to your Intelligence modifier.

Miss: You must repeat this attack against a different creature, gaining a cumulative +5 bonus to the damage roll each time you miss. You cannot target the same creature with this attack twice. You can choose to take damage equal to your level to cancel this miss effect.

New Warlock Items

The Crimson Knights fashioned weapons and armor in the style of Hell's legions. Some of these items survive to this day.

Rod of Avernus — Level 3+

This brass rod is tipped with a gleaming, red jewel that glows with a yellow aura. As you grasp it, your enemies instinctively cower before you.

Lvl 3	+1	680 gp	Lvl 18	+4	85,000 gp
Lvl 8	+2	3,400 gp	Lvl 23	+5	425,000 gp
Lvl 13	+3	17,000 gp	Lvl 28	+6	2,125,000 gp

Implement (Rod)
Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls
Critical: +1d6 damage per plus
Property: When you gain the benefit of your warlock's pact boon, you can slide each enemy affected by your Warlock's Curse 1 square.

Power (Daily): Minor Action. Until the end of the encounter, any enemy that ends its turn adjacent to you takes 5 psychic damage.
Level 13 or 18: The damage increases to 10.
Level 23 or 28: The damage increases to 15.

Armor of Dark Majesty — Level 4+

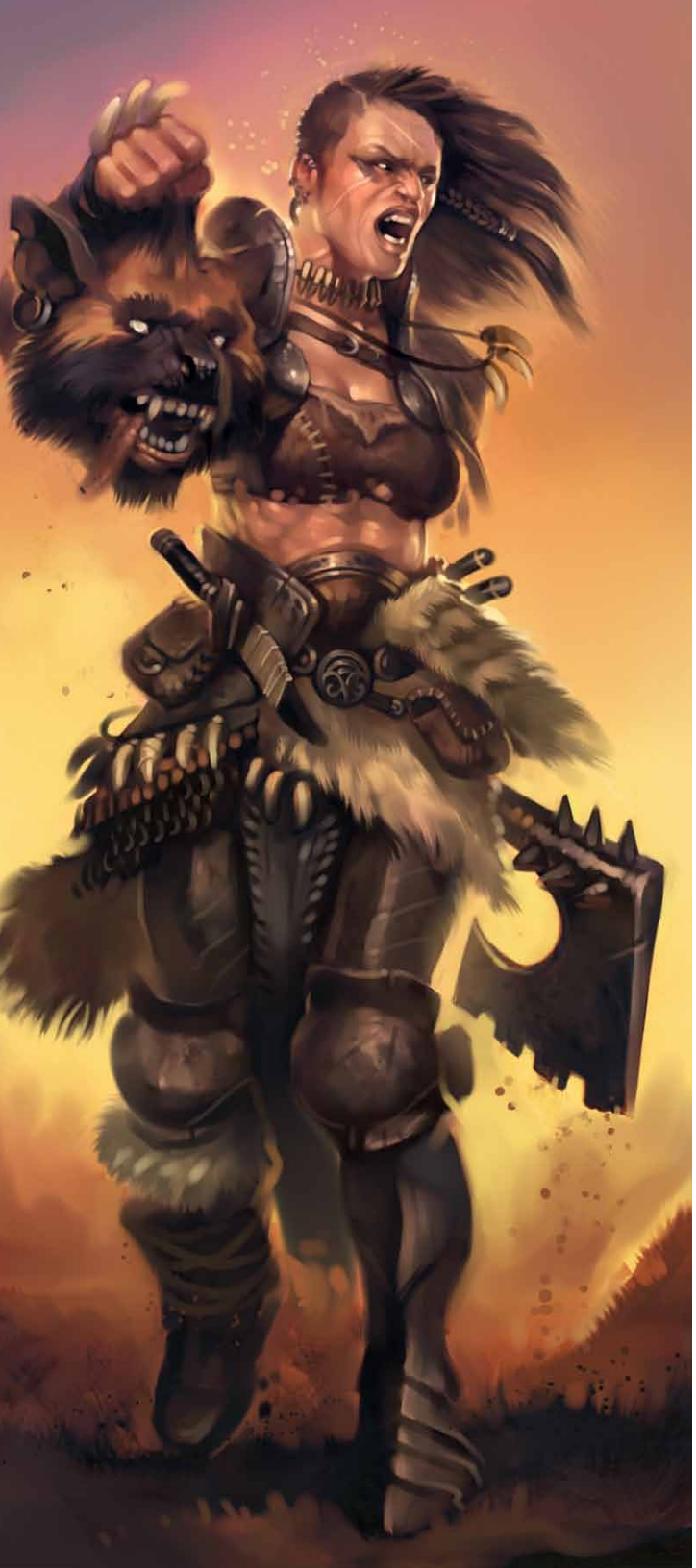
This armor is studded with gleaming, brass studs that flicker with hellish energies when you cast a spell.

Lvl 4	+1	840 gp	Lvl 19	+4	105,000 gp
Lvl 9	+2	4,200 gp	Lvl 24	+5	525,000 gp
Lvl 14	+3	21,000 gp	Lvl 29	+6	2,625,000 gp

Armor: Leather, hide
Enhancement: AC
Property: You gain an item bonus to Bluff and Intimidate checks equal to this armor's enhancement bonus.
Property: You gain a +2 item bonus to all defenses against enemies under your Warlock's Curse.
Power (Daily): Minor Action. Place your Warlock's Curse on any enemy you can see, rather than the nearest enemy.

About the Author

Mike Mearls is the Lead Designer for the Dungeons & Dragons® roleplaying game. His recent credits include *Player's Handbook™ 3*, *Hammerfast*, and *Primal Power™*.



Class Acts: Barbarian

Secrets of the True Born

By Robert J. Schwalb
Illustration by Eric Belisle

Since the legendary Battle of the Nine Sons, humanity has given up ground. It has retreated to Nerath's crumbling bastions, and now it huddles in the feeble light left from their last empire. As civilization recedes, it abandons cities, towns, farmland, and battlefields to the few hardy souls who refuse to follow the rest of humanity into hiding.

The True Born is one such group of people. Claiming descent from the doughty warriors who stood against the gnoll hordes, the True Born stood fast while the wilderness swept around them to reclaim cultivated lands. Distance separates them from other human settlements, leaving them to ensure their own survival in the harsh landscape. Although they cling to the ancient values and traditions put forward by the Nerathi kings, time has swept away much of their knowledge until only fragments remain.

The people of the True Born survive in the hostile world due to their deep reverence for the warriors who came before them. As a primal people, the True Born calls upon the land's spirits—but not the spirits of the trees and rocks. Instead they seek to contact the fallen knights and soldiers who died to protect Nerath from the White Ruin. All warriors undergo secret rites of passage in which they invite warrior spirits to aid in their struggle and lend them strength against the enemy. During this rite, a worthy warrior sees an ancestor and the two merge into one being. From that day forward, the True Born warrior abandons his or her childhood name and takes the name of the warrior whose spirit reside within him or her.

The greatest warriors are berserkers—in the heat of battle, the ancestor spirit does not rest easy and lends its incredible strength and courage to the combat more directly. These "rages" turn an already fearsome warrior into a savage killer, and nothing can stand for long before the wrath of this melding of warrior and spirit.

Although the True Born is a human tribe, they are not so closed as to disallow worthy additions from other races or from other tribes. Such characters must learn the tribe's lore, embrace its history and purpose, and undergo the rite of passage. Characters associated with the True Born can be of any class, though the True Born favor primal classes, with thaneborn barbarians being preferred most of all.

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New Barbarian Evocations

The ancestor spirits residing in barbarians awaken new techniques and styles, many of which find their roots in the old Nerathi battle tactics.

Level 1 Encounter Evocation

Rending Strike — Barbarian Attack 1

You tear your weapon through the enemy, leaving it vulnerable to an ally's attack.

Encounter ✦ Fear, Primal, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Strength vs. AC
Hit: 2[W] + Strength modifier damage, and the next time the target takes damage before the start of your next turn, it takes 1d6 extra damage and you slide it 1 square.
Thaneborn Triumph: You can slide the target a number of squares equal to your Charisma modifier instead of 1.

Level 2 Utility Evocation

Bloodthirsty Resurgence — Barbarian Utility 2

When you call upon your hidden reserves, you evoke the same new will in your allies.

Encounter ✦ Primal
Free Action **Close** burst 2
Trigger: You spend a healing surge
Target: Each ally in burst that can see you
Effect: The target gains temporary hit points equal to your Charisma modifier.

Level 3 Encounter Evocation

Roaring Challenge — Barbarian Attack 3

Upon striking your foe, you let loose a challenging roar, daring your foes to face you.

Encounter ✦ Fear, Primal, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Primary Target: One creature
Primary Attack: Strength vs. AC
Hit: 2[W] + Strength modifier damage, and you make a close blast 3 secondary attack.
Secondary Target: Each enemy in blast
Secondary Attack: Charisma vs. Will
Hit: The target takes a –2 penalty to attack rolls until the end of your next turn.

Level 7 Encounter Evocation

Wheat to the Scythe — Barbarian Attack 7

The enemies fall before your weapon's wide arc, like wheat to the scythe.

Encounter ✦ Fear, Healing, Primal, Weapon
Standard Action **Close** burst 1
Target: Each enemy in burst that you can see
Attack: Strength vs. AC
Hit: 1[W] + Strength modifier damage, the target falls prone, and you regain 1 hit point.
Thaneborn Triumph: You can push the target 1 square.

Level 13 Encounter Evocation

Ruinous Strike — Barbarian Attack 13

The enemy recoils from your strike, shrinking away from you in terror to its own detriment.

Encounter ✦ Fear, Primal, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Strength vs. AC
Hit: 3[W] + Strength modifier damage, you can slide the target 1 square, and the target gains vulnerable 5 to the next attack that hits it before the start of your next turn.
Thaneborn Triumph: You can slide the target a number of squares equal to your Charisma modifier instead of 1.

Level 16 Utility Evocation

Kill Them All — Barbarian Utility 16

You wrench your weapon from the corpse and call out to your comrades to end this fight.

Encounter ✦ Primal
Free Action **Close** burst 3
Thaneborn Triumph: The burst is equal to 1 + your Charisma modifier.
Trigger: You reduce an enemy to 0 hit points
Target: Each ally in burst that can hear you
Effect: The target gains a +2 power bonus to attack rolls and deals 1d6 extra damage on melee and ranged attacks until the end of your next turn.

Level 17 Encounter Evocation

Bloody Roar — Barbarian Attack 17

Your savage strike compels you to loose a terrifying scream at your enemies.

Encounter ✦ Fear, Primal, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Strength vs. AC
Hit: 3[W] + Strength modifier damage, and you make a close blast 3 secondary attack.
Secondary Target: Each enemy in blast
Secondary Attack: Charisma vs. Will
Hit: You push the target 3 squares, and the target takes a –2 penalty to attack rolls until the end of your next turn.

Level 23 Encounter Evocation

Throw Back the Horde — **Barbarian Attack 23**

The enemies gather around you, but you throw them back with a roar and a wide sweep of your weapon.

Encounter ✦ Fear, Healing, Primal, Weapon
Standard Action **Close** burst 1
Target: Each enemy in burst that you can see
Attack: Strength vs. AC
Hit: 2[W] + Strength modifier damage, you push the target 3 squares and knock it prone, and you regain 2 hit points.
Thaneborn Triumph: You push the target a number of squares equal to 2 + your Charisma modifier instead of 3 squares.

Level 27 Encounter Evocation

Nowhere to Run — **Barbarian Attack 27**

Your strike causes the enemy to panic, but no matter where it turns, your allies are there to confound its escape.

Encounter ✦ Fear, Primal, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Strength vs. AC
Hit: 3[W] + Strength modifier damage, and you slide the target 1 square. Whenever the target is damaged by an attack before the start of your next turn, the target takes 1d6 extra damage and you slide the target 1 square.

New Barbarian Feats

The following feats provide new options for thaneborn barbarians. While inspired by the True Born, these feats are available to any character who meets the prerequisites.

Heroic Tier Feats

Any feat in this section is available to a character of any level who meets the prerequisites.

Fearsome Bloodlust

Prerequisite: Barbarian, Thaneborn Triumph class feature

Benefit: Whenever you bloody an enemy with a barbarian attack power, you gain temporary hit points equal to your Charisma modifier.

Thaneborn Fury

Prerequisite: Barbarian, Thaneborn Triumph class feature

Benefit: When you hit a creature with a melee basic attack granted by the Rampage class feature, the target takes a –2 penalty to attack rolls until the end of your next turn. A creature that is immune to fear is not subject to this penalty.

Wrathful Recovery

Prerequisite: Barbarian, Thaneborn Triumph class feature

Benefit: When you use your second wind while raging, you regain extra hit points equal to your Charisma modifier.

Paragon Tier Feats

Feats in this section are available to any characters of 11th level and above who meet the prerequisites.

Bloodthirsty Visage

Prerequisite: 11th level, barbarian, Thaneborn Triumph class feature

Benefit: You gain a feat bonus equal to your Charisma modifier to damage rolls with barbarian fear powers.

Echoing Roar

Prerequisite: 11th level, barbarian, *roar of triumph* power

Benefit: Whenever you use your second wind, you also regain the use of *roar of triumph*.

About the Author
Robert J. Schwalb is an award-winning game designer whose more recent work can be found in *Martial Power™ 2*, *Draconomicon™ 2*, and *Primal Power™*. Robert lives in Tennessee.

Winning Races: Changeling

By Matthew J. Hanson
Illustration by Sarah Stone

Changelings are a diverse race in many ways. Some changelings wear their racial identity proudly, adopting the guise of another race only when they need to do so. Others have a dozen identities and switch between them as though they are switching hats. A few changelings choose to live their life as one race, and often as a single individual. What these changelings sacrifice in breadth they make up for in depth, becoming perfect copies of the race they imitate. These changelings are known as becomers.

Becomers of Choice and Becomers of Circumstance

Most changelings who adopt permanent identities choose their path. They might feel that one race best reflects their personalities, or they might idealize a race's culture and claim it as their own. In kingdoms where one race holds power over others, opportunistic changelings might become a member of the race on top. A few becomers choose a race to honor a certain individual. For instance, if a half-orc paladin sacrificed himself to save a changeling's childhood village, that changeling might live as a half-orc to honor the fallen hero.

Some changelings who live as becomers feel they have no other option. In many lands changelings are feared for their shapechanging abilities, and some kingdoms hunt down and execute changelings for the crime of being born. In these cases, fear drives changelings to adopt a single identity. In extreme situations changelings pass down borrowed races from parent to child. Generations of changelings might live among another race, and none but the changelings know the truth.

A Life of Lies

Many becomers struggle with the fact that a core element of their identity is a lie. Although they might trust traveling companions with their lives, many becomers do not reveal their secret to their closest friends. Some becomers marry a member of their chosen race without letting their spouse know the truth. Most rationalize their lies, believing that it serves the greater good, or that the truth could only hurt their friends and loved ones. Others fear that if their friends knew the truth, they would turn on the changeling as so many have done before. Only the most malicious becomers delight in their deception.

Some becomers take their false identity a step further. They lie so well that the changelings themselves believe that they are a member of the race they imitate. Most of the time when this happens, the changeling is mentally unbalanced. Sometimes changelings born to becomer parents genuinely fail to realize they are different. In either case, if these changelings are confronted with evidence of their true nature, they assume it is some kind of trick or that they have been magically transformed.

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Choice of Race

Although some changelings choose to become whichever race is most prevalent within the area, many changelings imitate a race for which they have a special affinity.

Deva: Because devas are tied to the good gods, some of the most religious changelings choose to live their lives as devas. Such changelings devote themselves fanatically to the causes of good. Changeling "devas" frequently draw from the divine power source, and many become paladins.

Dragonborn: Since changelings have no true culture of their own, some are drawn to races with rich histories, such as the dragonborn of Arkhosia. These becomers memorize the legends of their adopted empire and recite them to any willing to listen. Becomers who live as dragonborn favor classes such as warlord, bard, and sorcerer (particularly the dragon pact).

Human: Because of humanity's varying nature, they are one of the easiest races into which changelings can blend. Many choose to become humans because it is the most convenient race at the time. Others instead admire humanity's adaptability and the cultural heights of the empire of Nerath. Just as humans are comfortable in any class, so are changelings who imitate them.

Dwarf: Dwarven culture venerates tradition, laws, and honor, and it can be the polar opposite of the changelings' mercurial nature. For some changelings, constancy is exactly the point. They reject their nature and seek something much more stable. These changelings become dwarves who are among the most devoted to the ways of their ancestors, and they can recite their (fabricated) clan lineage back a hundred generations. A sizable number of becomers combine their changeling intellect with the dwarves' love for creation and frequently take the artificer class. Others frequently become paladins or crossbow-wielding rogues.

Eladrin: Changelings drawn to arcane arts choose to live as eladrin. These becomers are proud to live as part of a race with ancient roots of magical power, and they play up this element frequently. Not surprisingly many such changelings become wizards and swordmages. These changelings learn spells that allow them to teleport to conceal their lack of a natural *fey step*.

Elf: Some changelings feel more at home in the great forests than in large towns, and these changeling sometimes elect to become elves. They might live by themselves or as part of elven communities. Many are devoted to nature and violently oppose any who defile it. Changelings who live as elves sometimes draw from the primal power source, but favor martial classes such as rogues and rangers.

Genasi: The power of fire, frost, thunder, and lightning appeal to many changelings, and some of these choose to live as genasi. Most changelings imitate the more chaotic manifestations such as fire and wind, but plenty adopt the earth and water manifestation as well. Changelings who imitate genasi take arcane classes that wield elemental powers, such as wizard, swordmage, and sorcerer (especially storm sorcerer).

Goliath: Changelings who choose to live their lives among goliaths are drawn to the race's sense of competition. Although few such becomers cheat, they might find ways to bend the rules to work to their advantage. Other becomers adopt a goliath shape among civilized lands, both for the respect granted their newfound girth and because, as a more exotic race, fewer people know enough about goliaths to question the becomer's story. Just as the goliaths they imitate, such becomers favor the primal power source and become druids, shamans, and barbarians.

Half-Elf: Many becomers see the way that half-elves are caught between two worlds, and view it as a fitting metaphor for their own situation. These changelings realize that they will never truly fit in. However, they see becoming a half-elf as a way to still not fit in, while avoiding the fear and distrust that normally comes with being a changeling. Changelings who become half-elves frequently become bards, sorcerers, rogues, or warlocks.

Half-Orc: Changelings who adopt the form of the half-orc are attracted to the race's brash attitude and zest for life. Some choose to become half-orcs for their ability to intimidate others into letting them break society's duller rules. Either way, becomer half-orcs frequently play up the half-orc's aggressive nature and fondness for battle. Changelings who become half-orcs are most often martial classes, especially ranger, rogue, and warlord.

Kalashtar: Some changelings can tap their minds and unlock psionic powers. These changelings admire the kalashtar as the race most closely tied to the psionic power source. Changelings who choose to take on the form of kalashtar play up the mystical and otherworldly elements of the kalashtar race, particularly in lands with few kalashtar. These changelings frequently become one of the psionic classes, particularly psion and monk.

Shifter: Some changelings recognize shifters as fellow shapechangers and feel a certain kinship because of it. Others rebel against civilization and wish to return to an existence closer to the animals and see becoming a shifter as the natural way to do so. Becomers who imitate shifters frequently take primal classes, as well as ranger or rogue.

Tiefling: Some changelings are attracted to the darker elements of their soul, and for these changelings, becoming a fusion of human and demon can be appealing. Although they are not always evil, changelings who become tieflings are typically full of angst, a lust for power, or a need for revenge. A few changelings elect to become tieflings not because of the race's ties to darkness, but for the achievements of the ancient Bael Turath Empire. Regardless of their motivation, changelings who imitate tieflings frequently take the rogue, wizard, and especially warlock classes.

Becomer Backgrounds

The following backgrounds represent different reasons why a changeling might decide to permanently take on the guise of another race.

Driven into Hiding: You wear your disguise out of fear. You might live in a land where all changelings are hunted, or you might be singled out. Perhaps you were falsely accused of a crime, or witnessed something so unspeakable that the perpetrator cannot bear to let you live. How do you decide who to trust with your identity and who might betray you?

Associated Skills: Bluff, Stealth

Associated Languages: A language the imitated race speaks.

Racial Devotee: You have chosen to imitate a race because you idealize the race or think that it best represents your personality. Why did you choose this race? How do you think true members of the race would react if they found out the truth about you? How does it feel to be so close to the race you admire but never really be a part of it?

Associated Skills: History, Insight

Associated Languages: A language the imitated race speaks.

Raised as Another: Your changeling parents wore the guise of another race and have passed that on to you. You might have believed yourself a member of that race until only recently or known it since you were young. How did you react when you learned the truth of your identity? Will you cling to your adopted form or adopt the fluid ways of the changeling?

Associated Skills: A skill to which the imitated race gains a bonus.

Associated Languages: A language the imitated race speaks.

Heroic Tier Feat

Any feat in this section is available to a character of any level who meets the prerequisites.

Becomer

Prerequisite: Changeling, *changeling disguise* power

Benefit: When you select this feat, you must choose one race that you can imitate with your *changeling disguise* power. You learn one additional language known by the race you chose (if the race can choose any language so can you), and you gain a +2 racial bonus to one skill to which the chosen race gains a bonus (if you chose human you gain the bonus to one skill of your choice). Additionally, when using *changeling disguise* to imitate your chosen race, you gain an additional +5 bonus to avoid detection.

About the Author

Matthew J. Hanson currently lives in Minneapolis Minnesota, where he is pursuing a teaching license (as part of a clever plot to pass on D&D to future generations). His other recent RPG writings include contributions to *Azagar's Book of Rituals* and an article in the Spring 2010 issue of *Kobold Quarterly Magazine*.

Winning Races: Goliath
Giants of War

By Matt James
Illustration by Sarah Stone

With a heritage that is deeply seeded in the principles of strength, competition, and glory, goliaths take pride in all they do in life. In battle, few allies are better suited to have at your side than a goliath. Trained and disciplined from a young age, goliaths grow from the strength of the mountains to withstand the hardships, trials, and tribulations of extended conflict.

The goliaths' power and ability to withstand immense hardship has not gone unnoticed. Some immoral individuals have made a practice of capturing goliath children at play in their mountain homes—something more easily accomplished than might be expected. Goliaths, from an early age, are given to solitary wanderings in the harsh natural environs in which they live. Enterprising and well-equipped slavers have had a great deal of success snatching such individuals. The tribes, for their part, often never realize that the youths have been kidnapped. Falls into mountain crevasses, while rare for the sure-footed goliaths—are not completely uncommon.

Captured goliath slaves are raised in brutal conditions, toughened to pain, and turned into fierce gladiatorial warriors. These pit fighters have the opportunity to earn their freedom by amassing enough victories, but many find life outside the pit awkward. Years of harsh treatment and never-ending battle make acclimating to a "normal" life difficult, if not impossible. As a result, goliath slaves end up joining mercenary outfits. These goliath irregulars are elite soldiers that have formed bands across the world as a means of earning an honest living by augmenting other military units. Some call them mercenaries, others brutes, but their effectiveness cannot be questioned.

Many goliath slaves, current and former, follow the edicts and mandates of Kord, the storm god and lord of battle. His mandates state that followers must be strong of heart and mind, and that strength should never be used for wasteful destruction. He declares that followers must always be brave in the face of adversity and that cowardice is not to be tolerated. Many goliaths fit well into these mandates since their society encourages a willingness to win glory and renown.

What follows is material that provides you with rules for making your goliath character into a gladiator. A background, several feats, two magic items, and a paragon path should give your character both the flavor of coming from a gladiatorial background as well as rules-based options to back up that story decision for your character.

Goliath Gladiator

You are the epitome of strength, skill, and grit on the field of battle. Because you have trained your entire life to entertain others in bloody gladiatorial matches, you have gained unique talents found only in the arena. Your experiences have tempered you so that you can endure the unendurable and push to defeat the undefeatable. Scars crisscross your body, detailing your tumultuous journey in the gladiatorial pits and beyond them.

Background

The following background can help you develop your character's story.

Veteran of the Arena: You know what it takes to defeat an opponent and make no apologies for the lifestyle you have chosen. Borne of blood and sweat, you have endured what has sundered so many others. Were you conscripted into the gladiator corps as a means of bolstering existing forces? Were you destined to follow in the footsteps of a great family patron?

Associated Skills: Athletics, Endurance

Feats

The following feats can provide a goliath with enhanced ways of dealing with the brutal world in which he or she journeys.

Heroic Tier Feats

The following feats are suitable for any character who meets the prerequisite.

Brute Force

Prerequisite: Goliath

Benefit: When you hit an enemy with a melee weapon daily attack, you can also push the target 1 square and knock the target prone.

Cast Aside

Prerequisite: Goliath

Benefit: Whenever a Medium or smaller creature succeeds in escaping from being grabbed by you, you can slide the creature 3 squares as an opportunity action.

Goliath Resolve

Prerequisite: Goliath

Benefit: When you use your second wind, you gain +3 to all defenses instead of the normal +2.

Natural Intimidator

Prerequisite: Goliath

Benefit: You gain a +3 feat bonus to Intimidate checks. During a skill challenge, you accrue failures on Intimidate checks only if you fail by 5 or more.

Paragon Tier Feat

The feat in this section is available to any characters of 11th level and above who meet the prerequisites.

Legacy of War

Prerequisite: 11th level, goliath, *stone's endurance*

Benefit: You add your Constitution modifier to the resistance provided by your *stone's endurance* racial power.

Magic Items

Boots of the Giantkind Level 9+

These boots are made of overlapping flaps of behemoth skin and are extremely heavy.

Item Slot: Feet
Lvl 9 4,200 gp Lvl 29 2,625,000 gp
Lvl 19 105,000 gp
Property: You gain a +2 item bonus to Athletics checks and a +2 item bonus to Strength attacks made to grab a creature.
Power (Daily): Minor Action. *Effect:* You gain a +4 item bonus to all Athletics checks and Strength attacks made to grab a creature until the end of your next turn.
Level 19: +7 item bonus.
Level 29: +10 item bonus.

Crown of the Goliath Champion Level 12

This crown is made of bone with carved archaic markings.

Item Slot: Head 13,000 gp
Property: You gain resist 10 thunder.
Power (Encounter): Immediate Interrupt. Until the start of your next turn, you gain resistance to all damage equal to the number of healing surges you have spent since your last extended rest.

Goliath Juggernaut

"Everybody! Move!"

Prerequisite: Goliath

You are a horrific and awe-inspiring sight on any battlefield. When working in mercenary units as a means to shatter an enemy's defensive line, you and your fellow juggernauts use a combination of brute strength and cunning tactics to crush anything in your path. Many armies have seen their shield-lines falter under the crushing cascade of goliath juggernauts and many commanders have come to fear your presence in any conflict.

However, your unpredictable methods makes you a controversial addition to the rosters of any army. No one can tell what will happen when you enter the fray, and you've discovered that some commanders prefer to avoid using your skills altogether due to your rumored capriciousness. However, this purported impulsiveness has a purpose: If your foe can't anticipate your next move, you are more likely to succeed at your chosen task.

When you choose the life of an adventurer, whatever your reasons for doing so, you use your knowledge of tactics to become a truly efficient part of the team with which you journey. In combat, you prefer to place yourself in the middle of the fray so that you can cause as much chaos as possible in as short a period as is required. However, you don't position yourself in this manner consistently enough to become predictable. Also, you are not without wits. Many discount your ability to anticipate your foe's maneuvering and tactics, which can cause them to underestimate you and ultimately lead you to success.

Goliath Juggernaut Path Features

Warborn (11th level): Your maximum hit points increase by 10.

Rampaging Action (11th level): When you spend an action point to make an attack, if you hit with the attack you knock all enemies adjacent to one target you hit prone.

Battlefield Warcry (16th level): Whenever you first become bloodied in an encounter, you and each ally within 5 squares of you gain a +2 bonus to attack rolls until the end of your next turn.

Goliath Juggernaut Attack Powers

Drive Them to Their Knees Goliath Juggernaut Attack 11

You smash your foe to the ground even while the wound from your last attack is still fresh.

Encounter ✦ Weapon
Free Action **Melee** 1
Trigger: You hit an enemy with a melee weapon attack
Target: The triggering enemy
Effect: The triggering attack deals 1[W] extra damage and the target falls prone.

Undeniable Tenacity Goliath Juggernaut Utility 12

You wade through the battlefield, shrugging off lesser wounds.

Daily ✦ Stance
Move Action
Effect: You enter the undeniable tenacity stance. Until the stance ends, you increase any resistances you have by an amount equal to your Constitution modifier.

Annihilating Strike Goliath Juggernaut Attack 20

You crush your enemy and drive it before you.

Daily ✦ Reliable, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Strength or Constitution vs. Fortitude
Hit: 5[W] + your Strength modifier + your Constitution modifier damage. You can slide the target 2 squares and then shift 2 squares to a square adjacent to the target.

About the Author

When not writing for Dungeons & Dragons®, **Matt James** is chained to his desk working endlessly on developing his website: Loremaster (http://www.loremaster.org). You can also follow him on Twitter at www.twitter.com/matt_james_rpg.

Winning Races: Half-Orc

By James Auwaerter
Illustration by Sarah Stone

The half-orc barbarian. The half-orc fighter. The half-orc rogue. These racial archetypes come to mind when people think of a half-orc character, but half-orcs excel at several other, less traditional classes. Why do these half-orcs sometimes choose to follow nontraditional paths?

Some of them spit in the face of tradition by refusing to be limited by the stricture of society, whether that society be a tribe of savage orcs, or a mixed gang of toughs within a bustling city. Others are less confrontational, seeking to express themselves more completely. For example, Thanhk was a half-orc left at the stairs of a temple run by the priests of the Raven Queen. As he grew to be a strong young male, he learned from the priests' teaching and was eventually initiated to the priesthood. Now Thanhk the battle cleric has joined a band of adventurers on the trail of an Orcus cult that had infiltrated the highest ranks of the local government, seeking how far the corruption has spread.

Although an average half-orc is stronger and more dexterous than an average human, individuals vary widely. A particular half-orc might find revelations in the stories of a swordmage hero and be inspired to pursue a similar path, while another might find guidance from a priest or paladin, and experience an awakening that leads him to his calling. For instance, Tawar was born a sickly child in a mixed tribe of half-orcs and orcs, and many thought she would not live to adulthood. But inside her frail body was a powerful mind and will. She trained far from the rest of the tribe, and she grew as strong as any of the full-blooded orcs. In the end, while in the stillness of her blade training she felt power calling to her. As she reached out for it, it enveloped her, and she could feel it protecting her from harm. Tawar left her tribe in search of someone to explain what she had found, and Tawar the swordmage now seeks to protect others to prove to them—and herself—that she is worthy of the power she has found.

Finally, other half-orcs find that life's paths have taken them somewhere unexpected. For example, Ugarth was an orphan living on the streets of a small city. He sought to join a local gang for protection, and for his initiation, he was told to steal a book from a local cloister of Ioun. The gang leaders expected he'd be caught before getting past the main doors, but the young half-orc made it into the inner sanctum of the library before being apprehended. Rather than turn the boy over to the local authorities for punishment, one of the guards took the time to speak with him and found out why he had done what he had done.

The guard befriended Ugarth and took him away from the city to a hidden monastery. There, he was trained in the ways of the avenger. Ugarth still has a few tricks from his days on the streets, but he now employs his talents on his god's behalf, rather than working against him.

Take a look at a couple of examples of nontraditional class choices for half-orcs, as well as some feats and paragon paths to support them.

Heroic Tier Feats

The following feats are suitable for a character who meets the prerequisites.

Blessed Strength

Prerequisite: Half-orc, paladin

Benefit: You can use your Strength modifier in place of your Charisma modifier when determining damage for your Divine Challenge or divine sanction.

Dodgy Charge

Prerequisite: Half-orc, avenger, *oath of enmity* power

Benefit: When you charge your *oath of enmity* target, your movement during the charge does not provoke opportunity attacks.

Invigorated Healing

Prerequisite: Half-orc, cleric

Benefit: When you are first bloodied in an encounter, until the end of your next turn whenever you use a healing power, the targets of that power heal additional hit points equal to the number of temporary hit points you gained from your Half-Orc Resilience racial trait.

Strong-Arm Tactics

Prerequisite: Half-orc

Benefit: You gain a +2 feat bonus to Intimidate checks and you can use your Strength modifier in place of your Charisma modifier for Intimidate checks.

Avengers

Religious half-orcs are drawn to become clerics and paladins, but some choose a different route. A half-orc avenger is an implacable foe. Taking advantage of their natural dexterity, most make use of the Censure of Pursuit class feature. Wielding massive weapons such as execution axes and fullblades, they strike with great power . . . and running from them only makes them even deadlier.

Many evil half-orc avengers follow Gruumsh and swear oaths of vengeance against the elven peoples. They wear little more than a loincloth as they charge into the middle of their foes, seeking to inspire terror. Some choose to put out an eye in emulation of their god, but they are just as deadly (if not more so) than their fully sighted fellow half-orcs.

Unaligned half-orcs are more likely to follow Kord. They can have a mercenary outlook, seeking opportunities to prove their strength. If they do not feel sufficiently challenged, they might seek to make a battle more difficult for themselves, or seek out new battles entirely. Their desire for battle is more tempered than followers of the One-Eyed God because they believe that battle should be fought for greater glory, and not for destruction's sake alone. In either case, half-orcs seek to prove their might and the might of their gods as they overcome their foes.

Paragon Path: Mighty Judge

"You have been judged . . . and found wanting."

Prerequisite: Half-orc, avenger, Censure of Pursuit class feature, *oath of enmity* class feature

You are compelled to seek out and destroy those unworthies who thwart—by intent or by accident—the will of your patron. Your deity has tasked you to hunt down these infidels and see them brought to justice, and you do so with implacable zeal. You remain vigilant for signs of enemies of your faith. When you find them, you follow the will of your deity to the letter, bringing these foes to their knees. You tolerate no deviations from your course, whether brought about by others or by what some would call extenuating circumstances. Your half-orc heritage provides you with physical strength to handle those who might oppose your efforts to judge others as well as with mental fortitude to follow through on the task at hand.

Your god has taught you that strength hidden is strength lost. When battle must be joined, you let your foes know that you stand in judgment of them, displaying your power unflinchingly. When you call them out, they know that their time is at hand. You will carry out the sentence that you levied against them, and when they fall, you know that your god smiles upon your efforts.

Mighty Judge Path Features

Furious Judgment (11th level): Whenever an enemy moves away from you willingly, instead of gaining the bonus to damage rolls from Censure of Pursuit you can choose to regain the use of your *furious assault* racial power.

Refocusing Action (11th level): When you spend an action point to make a weapon attack, you can change your *oath of enmity* target to one of the targets of your attack before making that attack.

Jailer of the Gods (16th level): Whenever you reduce a creature that is the target of your *oath of enmity* to 0 hit points, instead of killing the target or knocking it unconscious you can instead banish the target permanently to a prison within the chosen domain of your deity.

Relentless Advance (16th level): When you charge your *oath of enmity* target, you can use *bond of pursuit*, *bond of retribution*, or *leading strike* in place of a melee basic attack during the charge.

Mighty Judge Powers

Overpowering Retribution — Mighty Judge Attack 11

A solid blow to your enemy lets you forget the pain it caused.

Encounter ✦ Divine, Weapon
Immediate Interrupt **Melee** weapon
Trigger: You are damaged by an enemy's attack
Target: The triggering enemy
Attack: Wisdom vs. AC
Hit: 2[W] + Wisdom modifier damage. If your attack does more damage than the triggering attack, reduce the damage from the triggering attack to 0.
Special: If you use your *furious assault* racial power to add extra damage to this attack, you gain a +2 power bonus to your next attack roll made before the end of the encounter with an avenger attack power or a mighty judge paragon path attack power.

Ameliorating Onslaught — Mighty Judge Utility 12

Your powerful strike lets you share your strength with an injured companion.

Daily ✦ Divine, Stance, Healing
Minor Action **Personal**
Effect: You enter the ameliorating onslaught stance. Until the stance ends, whenever you gain the damage bonus from your Censure of Pursuit class feature when you hit an enemy, one ally within 5 squares of that enemy regains hit points equal to the damage bonus from your Censure of Pursuit class feature.

Sentence of Banishment — Mighty Judge Attack 20

Your enemy has two options: to face you, or to be banished to a realm where it feels your god's wrath.

Daily ✦ Divine, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Wisdom vs. AC
Hit: 4[W] + Wisdom modifier damage.
Miss: Half damage.
Effect: The first time the target makes an attack that does not include you as a target before the end of the encounter, remove the target from play after the attack is resolved. If the target is under the effect of your *oath of enmity*, that effect ends and you regain the use of your *oath of enmity* power. The target returns to play at the end of its next turn in the same square from which it was removed, or in the nearest unoccupied square.
Special: If you use your *furious assault* racial power to add extra damage to this attack, you gain a +2 power bonus to your next attack roll made before the end of the encounter with an avenger attack power or a mighty judge paragon path attack power.

Clerics and Paladins

Half-orcs have less use for organized religion as a whole than other races, seeking to worship the gods on their own terms rather than through more traditional venues. Those who can navigate the twists and turns of a temple's hierarchy to ordination or investiture of power make excellent clerics and paladins. They channel their strength through service to deities such as Kord, Melora, or Pelor. Half-orc clerics try to regain some of the mobility lost to heavy armor by becoming proficient with scale armor, while half-orc paladins are more likely to use two-handed weapons than suffer penalties due to a heavy shield. In either case, a half-orc prefers to attack with a greataxe or a maul rather than with a holy symbol—half-orcs revel in their physicality.

Paragon Path: Lightning Blitzer

"I will be where my honor requires me to be—in the front of the fight."

Prerequisite: Half-orc, cleric or paladin

You grew up in a tribe that valued speed in battle, to the point that none would wear any armor heavier than a leather vest, or perhaps a hide cuirass. When you came of age, you saw the downsides of this strategy. Swift warriors found that their enemies' blades were just a little swifter. You challenged the orthodoxy of the tribe, favoring heavier and heavier armor. Your tribe mocked you, for with your protection, you found you could no longer keep up with the rest of the tribe in battle and would inevitably fall behind your comrades as they claimed glory. Some murmured that you wore the armor so that you would not have to fight and risk your life.

You would not be known as a coward, so you went on a pilgrimage in honor of your deity. You wanted to prove your bravery and seek an answer to your problem—the balance of defense and agility. When you reached your goal, tired and worn, you did not ask the gods for answers: You demanded them. You had shown your strength and proven your courage. A blessing from the gods was the only just reward for your exploits. A storm raged about you, and as you finished your demands, lightning struck you. Many gods would have killed you for your effrontery, but perhaps you pleased your patron with your attitude. You awoke later, unharmed, and you knew your prayers were answered.

Many of your tribe had already written you off as dead when you began your pilgrimage, and they were astounded to see you return. You would not tell them what happened, preferring once again to prove yourself through your deeds. When next the tribe went into battle, they were surprised as you kept speed with the other warriors, and amazed when you fell upon your enemies, your every blow ringing out with the power of the storm.

Lightning Blitzer Path Features

Armored Swiftness (11th level): You take no penalty to speed and gain a +1 bonus to your Reflex when wearing heavy armor.

Repositioning Action (11th level): When you spend an action point to make an attack, you can shift half your speed before or after the attack.

Thunder God's Blessing (16th level): When you use your *furious assault* racial power to add damage to a divine weapon attack, you also deal thunder damage equal to your Wisdom modifier to each enemy adjacent to the target.

Lightning Blitzer Powers

Prophecy of Reprisal Lightning Blitzer Attack 11

The power of your deity arcs through your weapon and into your foe, giving it pause. Any grievous wounds you have sustained focus the strength your heritage provides once again.

Encounter ✦ Divine, Lightning, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Strength vs. AC
Hit: 2[W] + Strength modifier lightning damage, and the target is dazed until the end of your next turn.
Effect: If you are bloodied, you regain the use of your *furious assault* racial power if you have already expended it.

Charging Rebuke Lightning Blitzer Utility 12

You drive back those that would attack you as you make your way across the battlefield.

Encounter ✦ Divine
Free Action **Melee** 1
Trigger: An enemy hits you with an opportunity attack
Target: The triggering enemy
Effect: The target takes a -2 penalty to the triggering attack roll. After the attack is resolved, you push the target 2 squares.

Catastrophic Impact Lightning Blitzer Attack 20

You raise your weapon high, and it crackles with the power of the storm as you charge.

Daily ✦ Divine, Lightning, Thunder, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Special: You can use this attack in place of a melee basic attack when you charge.
Attack: Strength vs. AC
Hit: 3[W] + Strength modifier lightning and thunder damage, and the target is blinded and deafened (save ends).
Miss: Half damage and the target is blinded and deafened until the end of your next turn.
Effect: If you are bloodied, you regain the use of your *furious assault* racial power if you have already expended it.

Swordmages

The path of the swordmage for a half-orc is a long and arduous one. The unfair stereotype of the stupid half-orc leads potential tutors to reject the half-orc as a student. Some eladrin swordmages bear ill-will to orcs, and half-orcs by extension, and seek to block any from learning their spells and secrets. For their part, half-orcs who might do well as swordmages instead take up the craft of the warlord, leading their tribe or an adventuring party in battle.

Those half-orcs who do become swordmages learn from other half-orc swordmages or the occasional genasi or human—if they learn from anyone at all. Half-orcs who find mentors work best with those who can understand the value of physical strength along with the mental discipline required to be a successful swordmage, and these mentors should also lack any strong racial prejudice against half-orcs. On the other hand, self-taught half-orc swordmages can come as a great surprise to gangs of toughs or tribes of primitive humanoids who expect that a lone half-orc with a sword and leather armor can't fight all of them at once.

In any of these cases, the half-orc learns the ways of the assault swordmage. This allows the half-orc to take advantage of his or her strength and dexterity to learn to handle his or her blades more effectively as weapons, rather than implements of his or her will. Half-orc swordmages learn to use some of their more basic spells when given the slightest opportunity, and some become masters of their heavy blades. Furthermore, half-orc swordmages have learned to compensate for the decreased strength of their warding while wielding a two-handed blade with a style of parrying and deflection that is all their own.

Half-orcs make for surprisingly graceful swordmages. The only race that rivals them in grace is the eladrin, but each achieves grace in different ways. The eladrin swordmage is a single flower petal falling on a still pond—calm, with a sense of inevitability. The half-orc swordmage is a hunting panther or a diving falcon—power contained effortlessly, then unleashed in an instant.

One group that has fully embraced these concepts is called the Sharakim. Taking its name from a race of orcs who sought to overcome their more savage impulses, the Sharakim is a group composed entirely of half-orcs who intend to prove themselves the equal of any swordmage, both on the battlefield and off. They refuse to let the common prejudices against orcs and half-orcs define how they should act—either by conforming to those prejudices, or mindlessly reacting against them.

Paragon Path: Sharakim Blademaster

"I will be myself—not who you believe I should be."

Prerequisite: Half-orc, swordmage, Aegis of Assault class feature

You have proven yourself to the Sharakim and are a full blademaster of the order. It has not been an easy path, but you have found a balance between your instincts and the rules of the society in which you live. You have trained in etiquette so that you are, at the least, competent in such matters, but you are not afraid to unleash your inner savage when it serves you better. In either case, your words demand that listeners pay you heed.

In battle, you are continually in motion. Each step flows another strike against a foe, and when you explode into action, all enemies around you can feel the pain. Even in the middle of your battle fury, you work to protect your allies, drawing a foe's attention to you with every blow.

Sharakim Blademaster Path Features

Flurry of Action (11th level): When you spend an action point to make a swordmage attack or a Sharakim blademaster attack, if the attack hits you can use your *furious assault* racial power to add extra damage to that attack, even if you have already used *furious assault* during this encounter.

Sharakim Gravitas (11th level): You gain training in Diplomacy and Intimidate. The first time that you earn a success with Diplomacy or Intimidate during a skill challenge, it counts as two successes, even if the skill allows for a maximum of one success.

Expansive Aegis (16th level): The range on your *aegis of assault* power increases to **Close** burst 5.

Sharakim Blademaster Path Powers

Blade Flows Like Water Sharakim Blademaster Attack 11

As you stride forward, you deal a blow to each enemy you pass.

Encounter ✦ Arcane, Force, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Effect: You shift 4 squares. Each time you enter a square adjacent to an enemy for the first time during the move, you can use the following attack against that enemy.
Target: One creature
Attack: Intelligence vs. AC
Hit: 2[W] + Intelligence modifier force damage, and you mark the target until the end of your next turn.
Special: If you have not yet expended your *furious assault* racial power in this encounter, you also add your Strength modifier to the damage of this attack.

Ghost Lion's Step Sharakim Blademaster Utility 12

You move through the battlefield with supreme confidence, letting nothing stop you.

Encounter ✦ Arcane
Minor Action **Personal**
Effect: Until the end of your next turn, you do not provoke opportunity attacks from moving, you ignore difficult terrain, and you are immune to being dazed, slowed, or immobilized.

Enforced Peace Sharakim Blademaster Attack 20

If the enemy chooses to attack your allies, the consequences are on his own head.

Daily ✦ Arcane, Reliable, Weapon
Immediate Reaction **Close** burst 10
Trigger: An enemy that you marked hits one of your allies with an attack
Effect: You teleport 10 squares to a square adjacent to the triggering enemy and make the following attack.
Target: The triggering enemy
Attack: Intelligence vs. Fortitude, Reflex, Will. You make one attack roll, comparing the result against these three defenses. The target suffers the effect associated with each defense that the attack hits.
Hit (Fortitude): The target is weakened until the end of its next turn.
Hit (Reflex): The target is slowed until the end of its next turn.
Hit (Will): The target is dazed until the end of its next turn.
Hit (Any): 2[W] + Intelligence modifier damage.
Special: If you have not yet expended your *furious assault* racial power in this encounter, you also add your Strength modifier to the damage of this attack.

About the Author

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Channel Divinity: Corellon
The House of Flowers

By Andrew Schneider
Illustration by Chuck Lukacs

Hate the drow? Don't be ridiculous. How can you hate something that has no place in the world? Their entire existence was an accident—a mistake—and it is up to us to correct it.

—Liria Valthorin

Bards sing of the archfey known as the Rose King, who led an entire eladrin city in a grand crusade against the drow and their followers. The Rose King claimed to be the son of Corellon, and he convinced the city that it was their duty and their birthright to permanently resolve the problem of the drow. They began with the drow city of Irith Tal.

Unfortunately, the Rose King underestimated the dangers of the Feydark and the willingness of the drow to put aside their rivalries when faced with an outside foe. Drow raiders harried his army at every step, fading in and out of the shadows, while aberrant horrors feasted on scouts and pickets one by one. Nevertheless, the archfey would not be dissuaded. He and a corps of his elite guards made it as far as the heart of Irith Tal before they were ambushed and killed. With the Rose King and his army dead, the drow responded in kind, reducing the archfey's city to ruins and scattering its name on the winds.

The tales also report that Liria Valthorin, a young devotee of Corellon and handmaiden to the Rose King, was among the few who survived.

The truth is more sordid. Zarra, a drow priestess from Irith Tal, arrived one morning at the palace of the Rose King, seeking asylum from her people. Zarra seduced the Rose King, and together they had a daughter, Liria. Zarra intended to spirit Liria away to Irith Tal—with the blood of an archfey in her veins, Liria was to have ensured the dominance of Zarra's house in drow politics for centuries to come—but escaping an archfey, even a romantic such as the Rose King, was no mean feat. After ten years, the Rose King traveled to the Court of Stars on a matter of state, and Zarra escaped.

The Rose King, and his ill-fated war, soon followed. Liria watched wide-eyed from her mother's tower as the Rose King fell under the onslaught of a coven of drow matriarchs. Using her own nascent powers, Liria broke through the teleportation wards around the city and escaped with Janil, the captain of her father's guard. Together, they fled to the deepest Feywild where they founded the House of Flowers.

In the early days of the House of Flowers, Liria and Janil walked through her memories of that day,

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attempting to recreate the Rose King's fighting style to preserve the specialized combat techniques developed by her father. Passing this knowledge on to adventurers, she gains a small bit of vengeance for every drow who falls to one of her trainees.

Liria has a network of spies throughout the world and Feywild, watching for those wronged by the drow and then recruiting them to her cause. She also keeps an eye out for martial-minded devotees of Corellon, talented sword wielders, and adventurers who have proven themselves against the drow.

Acolyte of the House of Flowers

Grace, mobility, and magic, that is the way of the House of Flowers. The sword dance is more than an extension of your will—it is what you are.

—Janil, House of Flowers warmaster

Followers of the House of Flowers fight drow and their allies from early in their careers. Zarra, now a drow matron, has never given up her dream of using her daughter's power to her advantage, and drow scouts scour the Feywild for signs of her. The House of Flowers moves often to avoid detection, but running battles occur between drow and acolytes in defense of the school. Liria sends advanced students as ambassadors, either into the depths of the Feydark to negotiate temporary alliances with fomorian lords, or to the Court of Stars itself, to plead for the unification of the entire Feywild against the drow threat beneath their feet. Liria's dearest dream is to preside over the destruction of Irith Tal and her mother's downfall, but neither she nor her students yet equal her father's power.

Several backgrounds, feats, and grandmaster training options are available to help add a story-based and rules-based dimension to your acolyte of the House of Flowers character.

Backgrounds

Choose one of the following backgrounds to help flesh out your character's backstory.

Survivor of Drow Raiders: Your life was comparatively peaceful before the night of fire and death, when a drow raiding party in search of treasure and slaves boiled out of a hole in the ground and destroyed everything you held dear. Shortly thereafter, agents from the House of Flowers contacted you and took you in as a trainee. Were you overlooked during the drow attack, or did you fight to freedom? Were any of your friends or family captured in the raid? Do you hate the drow, or have put your hatred behind you?

Associated Skills: Arcana, Religion

Associated Languages: Elven

Blademaster: A consummate duelist, you crossed blades with the best you could find and lived to tell of it. That is, until you met Liria Valthorin. Disarmed and with her sword at your throat, she offered you training at her school, the House of Flowers, instead of death. Did you duel for money, fame, or some other reason? Are you a young hotshot, still building your reputation, or is this a new chapter in a long career? Do you consider Liria a teacher, friend, or rival?

Associated Skills: Acrobatics, Insight

Associated Languages: Elven

Heroic Tier Feats

The following feats are taught at the House of Flowers. They are useful for both divine and arcane classes who seek to emulate Corellon's skill and grace with the longsword. Each power associated with these feats is accompanied by an abbreviation to indicate in which product the power appears: *Arcane Power* (*AP*), *Divine Power* (*DP*), *Forgotten Realms Player's Guide* (*FRPG*), *Player's Handbook* (*PH*), *Player's Handbook 2* (*PH2*), *Player's Handbook Heroes: Series 2* (*PHH2*).

Rose King's Balm

Prerequisite: Paladin or swordmage, proficiency with longsword

Benefit: You gain a +2 feat bonus to Heal checks.

On your turn, if you hit an enemy with an attack power associated with this feat while using a longsword, you gain a +2 power bonus to saving throws at the end of your turn. If you ended your turn more than 2 squares away from where you started, the bonus is instead +5.

Associated At-Will Powers: *greenflame blade* (swordmage *FRPG*), *holy strike* (paladin *PH*)

Rose King's Fallen Petals

Prerequisite: Bard or cleric, proficiency with longsword

Benefit: You gain a +2 feat bonus to Nature checks. When you hit an enemy with an attack power associated with this feat while using a longsword, a dying ally adjacent to you gains a +5 power bonus to their next death saving throw.

Associated At-Will Powers: *guiding strike* (bard *PH2*), *priest's shield* (cleric *PH*)

Rose King's Lunge

Prerequisite: Avenger, cleric, or paladin; proficiency with longsword

Benefit: You gain a +2 feat bonus to Athletics checks.

Once per turn when you hit an enemy with an attack power associated with this feat while using a longsword, you can move 2 squares, even if you are restrained or immobilized.

Associated At-Will Powers: *bond of pursuit* (avenger *PH2*), *righteous brand* (cleric *PH*), *valiant strike* (paladin *PH*)

Rose King's Reprise

Prerequisite: Bard or cleric, proficiency with longsword

Benefit: You gain a +2 feat bonus to Perception checks.

When you hit an enemy with an attack power associated with this feat using a longsword, until the end of your next turn whenever you or an ally adjacent to you spends a healing surge, you and all adjacent allies regain 1 hit point.

Associated At-Will Powers: *recovery strike* (cleric *DP*), *war song strike* (bard *PH2*)

Rose King's Run

Prerequisite: Avenger or swordmage, proficiency with longsword

Benefit: You gain a +2 feat bonus to Athletics checks.

When you hit an enemy with an attack power associated with this feat while using a longsword, you gain a climb speed equal to your speed –2 until the end of your turn.

Associated At-Will Powers: *luring strike* (swordmage *AP*), *bond of retribution* (avenger *PH2*)

Rose King's Shield

Prerequisite: Avenger or swordmage, proficiency with longsword

Benefit: You gain a +2 feat bonus to Endurance checks.

Once per turn when you hit an enemy with an attack power associated with this feat while using a longsword, you gain 5 temporary hit points. If you ended your turn more than 2 squares away from where you started, you instead gain 10 temporary hit points.

Associated At-Will Powers: *booming blade* (swordmage *FRPG*), *focused fury* (avenger *PHH2*)

Rose King's Step

Prerequisite: Avenger or swordmage, proficiency with longsword

Benefit: You gain a +2 feat bonus to Acrobatics checks.

When you hit an enemy with an attack power associated with this feat while using a longsword, you can ignore difficult terrain while shifting until the end of your turn.

Associated At-Will Powers: *luring strike* (swordmage *AP*), *overwhelming strike* (avenger *PH2*)

Grandmaster Training

Liria has waited hundreds of years and trained thousands of heroes. Many die deep beneath the earth, while others abandon Liria's vendetta out of weariness or disgust at her hatred. Nevertheless, Liria hopes to find those destined to exterminate the drow once and for all. To the most gifted and resilient of her pupils, she teaches bladework learned on her father's knee.

Shunned by her father's people and coveted by her mother's, Liria leads a life of cautious seclusion. Viewing the drow as a blight on the world's garden, she likewise reviles the drow blood that colors her skin and bleaches her hair. When meeting with outsiders, she disguises herself with make-up and magic.

What Is Grandmaster Training?

Grandmaster training is a type of alternative treasure reward detailed in the *Dungeon Master's Guide 2*. It is a more story-driven reward than a magic item. See *Dungeon Master's Guide 2* for more details on grandmaster training.

Liria Valthorin's Silverlight Riposte Level 11

Your guard never falters, foiling the blades of sneaks and assassins.

Grandmaster Training 9,000 gp

Power (Encounter): Immediate Interrupt. *Trigger:* You are hit by an attack while you grant combat advantage. *Effect:* Negate any extra damage or effects that are a result of you granting combat advantage for the triggering attack.

Liria Valthorin's Unshakable Pursuit Level 13

Walls and ceilings prove no refuge as you learn to take the battle to your enemy.

Grandmaster Training 17,000 gp

Power (Encounter): Minor Action. Gain a climb speed equal to your speed until the end of your next turn.

Liria Valthorin's Blinding Blade Level 21

Your blade pulses with eldritch power, and your opponent's sight is lost to the aching beauty of the Feywild.

Grandmaster Training 225,000 gp

Power (Daily): Free Action. *Trigger:* You hit with a melee attack. *Effect:* The target is blinded (save ends). *Special:* If the triggering attack was made with a longsword, the target takes a –2 penalty to its saving throw to end this effect.

About the Author

Andrew G. Schneider always wanted to be a wizard when he grew up, but now instead of throwing fireballs, he makes magic with words. An author and freelance game designer, he also serves as Cormyr's writing director for Living Forgotten Realms. Andrew lives in his hometown in the Washington, D.C. area.

Channel Divinity:
Sehanine
Arrows from the Moonbow

By Claudio Pozas
Illustration by Chuck Lukacs

Every night, as the sun sets, the world plunges into another period of darkness. For lovers, it is an embracing cloak that hides them from unwanted eyes. For thieves and tricksters, it is a partner in their sneaky endeavors. However, the night would be filled with nothing but horrors were it not for the pale silver light that shines down on the world. The moon is not the fierce, judgmental gaze of the sun, but rather the knowing eye of an accomplice, of a partner, of a lover. That gleaming eye belongs to Sehanine, the Moonbow.

The core of Sehanine's teachings—forging one's own destiny—makes her popular among folk from all walks of life. Whether rural or urban, martial or arcane, every mortal can relate to this empowering credo. Even so, some rise to a position where they can lord over their lessers and deny these poor souls the ability to write their own history. It could be a tyrant enslaving peasants to toil the fields, an overzealous father forbidding a daughter's true love, or a righteous ruler instituting a strict martial law over a community. No matter how justified or well meaning, some try to exert undue power over the lives of others. And when these dark ambitions become too threatening to be ignored, heroes arise to give them battle. Rebels, outsiders, tricksters—their names are legion. But they are all arrows shot from the Moonbow.

Serving Sehanine

The common folk have reasons aplenty to honor Sehanine. She marks the passing months, encourages love and friendship, and teaches self-reliance. But those heroic few who come to dedicate their lives to the Moonbow are cut from a different cloth. Most of Sehanine's champions have experienced loss in their lives. The backgrounds below are examples of how one might come—voluntarily—to the service of Sehanine.

Lost Love: You have lost a loved one, and it had a profound impact on you. Was it a romantic partner, a family member, or a good friend? Was someone responsible for the death or departure of your loved one, or was it a cruel trick of life? Do you use this empathy to prevent others from suffering the same fate? How do you react to those who steal away loved ones, such as kidnappers or a mischievous fey? Do you favor bounties and quests aimed at

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rescuing relatives, or do you undertake those missions expecting no reward?

Regardless of how you lost a loved one, your heart guides you and helps you understand and appeal to the hearts of others.

Associated Skills: Diplomacy, Insight

Runaway: You are on the run from a harsh authority. Did you commit an actual crime, or were you falsely accused? What might happen if you were found out? How do you react to authority now? Do you try not to draw attention to yourself, for fear of being recognized, or do you boldly challenge anyone with a badge? Would you ever return to face those who accuse you, perhaps once you've found evidence of your innocence? Or do you plan on taking revenge on corrupt officials who framed you?

Did the authorities put a bounty on your head? If so, do you seek to evade the bounty hunters, or do you face them head-on, hoping to discourage others from trying their luck against you?

Stick to the shadows and keep your ears open to any rumors of your pursuers' whereabouts.

Associated Skills: Stealth, Streetwise

Persecuted: You lived under a regime that hunted those like you. Was it because of your race or faith? Was it because of your power source? Was that regime always in place, or was it a recent development? Perhaps you adventure in hopes of finding the means to topple the authorities that persecute you and your kind. Or maybe you're searching for a haven or sanctuary, so you can lead those like you to a new, welcoming home.

To survive, you learned to hide your true identity or heritage and to notice when someone might be tracking you.

Associated Skill: Bluff, Perception

Pledged Scout: You found Sehanine's teachings to your liking from an early age, and after your coming-of-age you joined the ranks of the Pledged Scouts, consummate explorers and wanderers devoted to the Moonbow. Are you specially pious, seeing omens everywhere? How did your family and friends react to your choice of career? Were you indoctrinated by another Pledged Scout, or were you a self-taught mystic? As a Pledged Scout you tend not to stay put for long. Do you have a hard time making friends, or do you leave behind a network of acquaintances that make you feel welcome whenever you return? Do you dream of one day crossing the forest paths of the Feywild, or perhaps reaching Arvandor?

You are at home in the wilderness, wondering what's over the next horizon.

Associated Skills: Nature, Perception

Freed Slave: You toiled under harsh masters until you were freed by one of Sehanine's champions. After years of suffering, your deliverance—whether by force of arms or by subterfuge—inspired you to repay the favor. Who enslaved you? Were they regular masters, hailing from the common races, or were they supernatural overlords, such as mind flayers, drow, or vampires? Do you seek to eradicate slavery altogether, or do you focus on freeing one slave at a time? Do you see slavery as another facet of a harsh world, trying not to think too much about those still in chains?

Are you afraid of returning to the site of your forced labor? Maybe your old masters might recognize you and try to take away your freedom again. Or perhaps you still have friends or family among the slaves there?

Enduring years of labor has made you strong and resilient, the better to face the challenges ahead.

Associated Skills: Athletics, Endurance

Omens and Rites of Sehanine

Sehanine sends messages to her faithful through several means. Some are widespread and witnessed by an entire region, while others are private and seen by a single mortal. Her omens (and their connotations) include the following:

- Blue moon (good omen, marks an auspicious event);
- Red moon (bad omen, heralds bloodshed);
- Dead tree with a single gold leaf (good omen, encourages hope);
- Shadows moving on their own (bad omen, heralds betrayal);
- A person who briefly casts no shadow (bad omen, marks a bringer of misfortune);
- An archer's arrow turns to silver (good omen, marks a bringer of justice);
- A candle's flame glows with silvery light during prayer (good omen, marks a heard prayer).

Priests of Sehanine are called upon to officiate several events, depending on the community they preach to. But the most common are these:

- Marriages (especially secret ones);
- Naming ceremonies;
- Archery contests;
- Harvest festivals.

Feats

Consider choosing one or more of the following feats for any character who worships Sehanine.

Heroic Tier Feats

Any feat in this section is available to a character of any level who meets the prerequisites.

Argent Falcon [Familiar]

Prerequisite: Arcane Familiar feat, must worship Sehanine

Benefit: The *argent falcon* feat power replaces one of your 6th-level or higher utility powers.

Argent Falcon — **Feat Power**

Your familiar transforms into a silver falcon, and shines with pure moonlight.

Encounter ✦ Divine
Minor Action **Personal**

Effect: Your familiar sheds bright light in its square and each square within 3 squares of it until the end of your next turn. Until the end of your next turn, enemies grant combat advantage while within 3 squares of your familiar.

Moon Sight

Prerequisite: Bard, Virtue of Prescience class feature, must worship Sehanine

Benefit: When you use your Virtue of Prescience, the triggering enemy takes psychic damage equal to your Wisdom modifier.

Moon Strike

Prerequisite: Must worship Sehanine

Benefit: While an enemy grants combat advantage to you, your attacks against that enemy count as silvered (*Player's Handbook*, page 220).

Moonbow Dedicate

Prerequisite: Must worship Sehanine

Benefit: You gain proficiency with the shortbow, plus you can use a shortbow as an implement for divine and arcane powers. In addition, you gain a +1 feat bonus to weapon and implement damage rolls with the shortbow. Increase this bonus to +2 at 11th level and +3 at 21st level.

Moonbow Stalker

Prerequisite: Rogue, must worship Sehanine

Benefit: You gain proficiency with the shortbow. In addition, you can use a shortbow with Sneak Attack and with any rogue power that normally requires a crossbow.

Sehanine and the Nondivine Worshiper

Sehanine is a popular deity with heroes from all walks of life, and each follower seeks to emulate or honor his or her deity. Below are suggestions of how a nondivine character can reflect devotion to the Moonbow.

Class Builds

Martial: Tempest fighter, archer ranger, artful dodger rogue, resourceful warlord.

Arcane: Prescient bard, ensnaring swordmage, wild magic sorcerer, fey pact warlock, orb of deception wizard.

Primal: Whirling barbarian, predator druid, panther shaman, wildblood warden.

Weapons

Bows of all qualities are favored by Sehanine, but shortbows are held in special regard, being easier to hide. Crossbows are frowned upon as Lolth's weapons.

Daggers, kukris, scimitars, falchions, and kopeshes are common in the hands of Sehanine's followers, because their curved blades are reminiscent of a crescent moon.

Skills

Stealth and Thievery are probably the most common skills among Sehanine's worshipers.

Powers

Powers that deal cold, psychic, and radiant damage are favorites, and fire-based powers are avoided. Poison is frowned upon as Zehir's weapon.

Companions

Arcane followers of Sehanine take falcon familiars that have sparkling silver wings and leave a trail of stars behind as they fly. Spiders and snakes are avoided.

Beastmaster rangers favor raptor companions and use bows to strike from afar. Serpents and spiders are avoided.

Serene Archery

Prerequisite: Wis 13, must worship Sehanine

Benefit: When you make a ranged basic attack using a bow with which you are proficient, you can use Wisdom instead of Dexterity for the attack roll and the damage roll.

Silvery Glow

Prerequisite: Must worship Sehanine

Benefit: You gain a +2 feat bonus to damage rolls with cold powers and radiant powers. Increase this bonus to +3 at 11th level and +4 at 21st level.

Swirling Leaves of Autumn

Prerequisite: Warlock, Fey Pact class feature, must worship Sehanine

Benefit: When your Misty Step pact boon triggers, the square you leave and each square adjacent to it become lightly obscured until the start of your next turn.

Paragon Tier Feat

The feat in this section is available to any character of 11th level and above who meets the prerequisites.

Moonbow Prelate

Prerequisite: 11th level, must worship Sehanine

Benefit: When you use a shortbow as an implement for a ranged or area divine attack power or ranged or area arcane attack power, you can extend the power's range by 5 squares.

New Paragon Path

Those who worship Sehanine might want to affect the lives of others in a positive fashion by ensuring that each person has a chance to make his or her own destiny. For these people, the Arrow of the Moonbow paragon path is an excellent choice.

Arrow of the Moonbow

"The moon aims at the darkness, and we are the arrows."

Prerequisite: Channel Divinity class feature, proficiency with a bow, must worship Sehanine

Under the cloak of night, tyrants and murderers grow restless. They sense an intent gaze upon them, like a bird of prey circling in for the kill. Sometimes this unease is enough to discourage despicable acts. But far too often, a more direct course of action needs to be taken, and the silvered head of an arrow puts down evil.

The Arrows of the Moonbow are a scattered sect of sworn brothers and sisters who dedicate their lives to ensuring that each mortal has a fair chance at writing his or her own destiny and changing his or her own stars. The Arrows travel far and wide, seeking no reward but that which they confiscate from the corpses of their targets. All sorts of divine heroes work among their ranks but, regardless of inclination, they all come to favor subterfuge, trickery and, above all, stealth.

Arrow of the Moonbow Class Features

Moonkissed Action (11th level): When you spend an action point to make an attack using a bow, you can roll one attack roll twice and take either result.

Walker in Twilight (11th level): You gain training in Stealth and also gain low-light vision. If you already have training in Stealth, you gain the Skill Focus feat for Stealth.

Break the Bonds (16th level): You gain the *break the bonds* Channel Divinity power.

Channel Divinity: Arrow of the Moonbow Feature
Break the Bonds

You will not bow to an outside force.

Encounter ✦ Divine
No Action **Personal**
Trigger: You are dominated, immobilized, petrified, or restrained
Effect: The triggering effect ends.

Arrow of the Moonbow Prayers

Three Moonbeams **Arrow of the Moonbow Attack 11**

Your arrows glow with moonlight, bathing your targets with a cold radiance and granting your allies a chance to reposition themselves.

Encounter ✦ Cold, Divine, Radiant, Weapon
Standard Action **Ranged** weapon
Requirement: You must be wielding a bow.
Target: One, two or three creatures
Attack: Wisdom or Charisma vs. AC
Hit: 1[W] + Wisdom or Charisma modifier cold and radiant damage per attack, and each ally adjacent to the target can shift 1 square as a free action. If you target only one creature, the attack deals 1[W] extra damage.

Moon Eye **Arrow of the Moonbow Utility 12**

No darkness can blind you when you carry the moon in your heart.

Daily ✦ Divine
Minor Action **Personal**
Effect: Until the end of the encounter you gain darkvision and cannot be blinded.

Moon Shot — Arrow of the Moonbow Attack 20

You gather the moon's white light around your arrow and fire it at your enemy, chilling it to the bone. To your ally, the light becomes a healing balm.

Daily ✦ Cold, Divine, Radiant, Weapon
Standard Action **Ranged** weapon
Requirement: You must be wielding a bow.
Target: One creature
Attack: Wisdom or Charisma vs. AC
Hit: 5[W] + Wisdom or Charisma modifier cold and radiant damage.
Miss: Half damage.
Effect: Each ally adjacent to the target can spend a healing surge.

Sehanine's Prayers

Sehanine's champions favor subtlety and trickery when fighting, regardless of the character's original role. Prayers that deal actual damage can assault the mind of the target (dealing psychic damage) or to use the light of the Moonbow (dealing cold and radiant damage). In addition to Wisdom, these prayers rely on Dexterity, Intelligence, or Charisma, showing the deity's favor for stealth, ingenuity and emotion.

Avenger Prayers

Level 6 Utility Prayer

Cloaked Steps — Avenger Utility 6

Shadows cling to you whenever you move, like a lover's embrace.

Daily ✦ Divine, Stance
Minor Action **Personal**
Effect: Until the stance ends, if you move more than 2 squares on your turn, you gain concealment until the start of your next turn.

Level 7 Encounter Prayer

Dark Moon Strike — Avenger Attack 7

You mark a foe as your sworn enemy and you disappear from the minds of all other foes.

Encounter ✦ Divine, Illusion, Implement
Standard Action **Ranged** 10
Target: One creature
Attack: Wisdom vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d8 + Wisdom modifier damage, and the target becomes the target of your *oath of enmity*, replacing the current target. You become invisible to all enemies other than the target until the end of your next turn.

Level 9 Daily Prayer

Shadow Tricks — Avenger Attack 9

Your brilliant strike against your sworn enemy causes its allies to cast long shadows, creating openings in their defenses.

Daily ✦ Divine, Radiant, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Wisdom vs. AC
Hit: 3[W] + Wisdom modifier radiant damage.
Miss: Half damage.
Effect: If the target is your *oath of enmity* target, each enemy within 5 squares of you other than the target grants combat advantage until the end of your next turn.

Cleric Prayers

Level 1 At-Will Prayer

Silvery Arrow — Cleric Attack 1

Your arrow bites deep into your opponent. The next time the enemy is hit, the arrow shatters into a shower of light.

At-Will ✦ Divine, Radiant, Weapon
Standard Action **Ranged** weapon
Requirement: You must be wielding a bow.
Target: One creature
Attack: Wisdom vs. AC
Hit: 1[W] + Wisdom modifier damage, and the next ally to hit the target before the end of your next turn deals extra radiant damage equal to your Charisma modifier.

Level 3 Encounter Prayer

Lost Love — Cleric Attack 3

You call upon Sehanine to place great love in your enemy's heart . . . and then yank it away.

Encounter ✦ Divine, Implement, Psychic
Standard Action **Ranged** 5
Target: One creature
Attack: Wisdom vs. Will
Hit: 1d8 + Wisdom modifier + Charisma modifier psychic damage, and the target grants combat advantage until the end of your next turn.

Level 15 Daily Prayer

Full Eclipse — Cleric Attack 15

Your shot carries the light of the full moon and the darkness of the new moon to your foe.

Daily ✦ Cold, Divine, Radiant, Weapon
Standard Action **Ranged** weapon
Requirement: You must be wielding a bow.
Target: One creature
Attack: Wisdom vs. AC
Hit: 2[W] + Wisdom + Charisma modifier cold and radiant damage, and the target is blinded (save ends).
Miss: Half damage, and the target grants combat advantage until the end of your next turn.

Invoker Prayers

Level 3 Encounter Prayer

Falling Leaves — Invoker Attack 3

Autumn leaves of golden light fall into the world from the mighty trees of Arvandor, clinging to your enemies and allies. They carry the echoes of summer and the preludes of winter.

Encounter ✦ Divine, Implement, Radiant
Standard Action **Area** burst 1 within 10 squares
Target: Each enemy in burst
Attack: Wisdom vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d8 + Wisdom modifier radiant damage, and if the target ends its next turn adjacent to an ally, it takes 5 radiant damage.

Level 5 Daily Prayer

Howl at the Moon — Invoker Attack 5

You call upon the inner beast of all creatures, entrancing them with the moon's radiance.

Daily ✦ Divine, Implement, Psychic
Standard Action **Area** burst 1 in 10 squares
Target: Each enemy in burst
Attack: Wisdom vs. Will
Hit: 1d8 + Wisdom + Intelligence modifier psychic damage, and the target is dazed until the end of your next turn. If the target is a shapechanger, it is instead dazed (save ends).

Level 9 Daily Prayer

Bestowed Lunacy — Invoker Attack 9

Moon madness spreads through your foes, as they strike their former comrades to avert the pressure in their minds.

Daily ✦ Divine, Implement, Psychic
Standard Action **Area** burst 1 within 10 squares
Target: Each enemy in burst
Attack: Wisdom vs. Will
Hit: 1d8 + Wisdom modifier psychic damage, and at the start of the target's next turn, the target takes a free action to make a basic attack against its nearest ally. If it cannot do so, it takes another 5 psychic damage and becomes dazed until the end of its turn.
Miss: 1d8 + Wisdom modifier psychic damage, and the target is dazed until the end of your next turn.

Paladin Prayers

Level 3 Encounter Prayer

Night's Mantle — Paladin Attack 3

Your shot leaves your allies concealed by faint shadow.

Encounter ✦ Divine, Weapon
Standard Action **Ranged** weapon
Requirement: You must be wielding a bow.
Target: One creature
Attack: Charisma vs. AC
Hit: 2[W] + Charisma modifier damage, and you subject the target to your divine sanction (*Divine Power,* page 82) until the end of your next turn.

Level 7 Encounter Prayer

Crescent Moon — Paladin Attack 7

You cut a wide arc with your glowing weapon, drawing a crescent moon of light that careens toward your foe.

Encounter ✦ Divine, Radiant, Weapon
Standard Action **Ranged** 5
Special: If you are wielding a heavy blade, the range is 10 squares.
Target: One creature
Attack: Strength vs. Reflex
Hit: 2[W] + Strength modifier radiant damage, and you subject the target to your divine sanction (*Divine Power,* page 82) until the end of your next turn.

Level 16 Utility Prayer

Stave Off Winter — Paladin Utility 16

Death's cold chill threatens your allies, but as autumn holds back winter, so shall you hold back the final fate.

Daily ✦ Divine, Healing
Immediate Interrupt **Close** burst 5
Trigger: An ally within 5 squares of you drops to 0 hit points or fewer
Target: You and each ally in burst
Effect: You can spend a healing surge but regain no hit points from it. When you spend a healing surge, the triggering ally regains hit points equal to his or her healing surge value. In addition, you can spend up to three additional healing surges but regain no hit points from them. For each surge you spend, choose an effect below (you cannot choose the same effect twice):
1. Each target gains resist 20 cold until the end of the encounter.
2. Each target gains resist 20 necrotic until the end of the encounter.
3. Each target ignores difficult terrain until the end of the encounter.

Magic Item

Moonbow — Level 13+

This slender bow is made of white wood so polished it looks like pearl, and its string is almost invisible. As you draw the string, a gleaming arrow of light appears, nocked and ready.

Lvl 13	+3	17,000 gp	Lvl 23	+5	425,000 gp
Lvl 18	+4	85,000 gp	Lvl 28	+6	2,125,000 gp

Weapon: Bow
Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls
Critical: +1d10 radiant damage per plus
Property: Sehanine worshipers can use this weapon as an implement for divine and arcane powers.
Property: Weapon and implement attacks made with this weapon count as silvered (*Player's Handbook,* page 220).
Property: This weapon creates its own ammunition when drawn. It can still be used with ammunition, if desired.
Power (At-Will): Minor Action. This weapon sheds bright light or dim light in a 5-square radius, or ceases to shed light.

About the Author

Claudio Pozas is a hybrid artist/writer multiclassed as a jack-of-all-trades. In the past 10 years, he worked on dozens of RPG products, usually doing both text and art. His credits include Fiery Dragon's *Counter Collection* and BattleBox series. He lives in his native Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, with his wife Paula, son Daniel and their pet dire tiger Tyler. His art can be seen at www.enworld.org/Pozas.

Power Play: The Covenant Agent

By Matt James
Illustration by SC Watson

"No please, allow me to buy you another drink. Tell me, gorgeous, where is that man you came in with?"

—Sevelyn

Some believe that the end justifies the means. Further, some place such high importance on the will of their deity that they not only embrace this belief with regards to their deity, but they also make daily decisions that include this belief. Several of those who follow this path have skills that allow them to lead a life of subterfuge and treachery—all in the name of their deity, of course. Unlike so many other braggarts and strivers found in every tavern and pub, these individuals are a cut above others in their chosen profession, which essentially involves infiltrating other organizations and performing assassinations in the name of their god.

Covenant agents receive training and practice discipline so that they can accomplish all manner of covert goals in the name of their deity, and they swear a covenant to the god of their choice to do what needs to be done to protect the deity's interests and further the deity's agenda. Whether they must deftly bypass a location's or creature's defenses, or smooth-talk an acquaintance of an assassination before killing the target, these experts in subterfuge are highly prized by those in a position of authority within relevant religious organizations.

Before beginning their specialized training, covenant agents frequently begin as priests or other loyal members of a congregation. Because of their faithful service to the faith, those within a position of power have already vetted them and, most likely, placed them among the trusted circles of their ministry. As each covenant agent takes on the new path placed before him or her, each also must shroud his or her ties to the religion to prevent any unfortunate political mistakes that would otherwise stain the good name of his or her holy benefactor.

These clandestine champions of a religious organization's will rarely receive training from more than a single member of the organization. Frequently, trainers are older covenant agents who wish to take a step back from active work and ensure that they can pass on their training to the next generation of covenant

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agents. The manner in which they choose (or gain, if an aspiring agent is assigned to them) a student involves a lot of secrecy, as well, and both trainer and student work together in environs that allow them to remain unnoticed—if they don't make mistakes. If the chosen environment becomes troublesome to either the trainer or student, they leave and find a new location in which to train.

Most religious organizations, regardless of disposition, make use of covenant agents within their ranks. Due to the nature of the work involved, however, different organizations have varying levels of secrecy regarding the existence of covenant agents. In those religions that preach peace and honesty, the covenant agent and those who know of his or her existence might discover that the calling to continue on the path must be strong indeed to overcome the conflict between the religious ideals of the deity and the practical day-to-day considerations he or she faces when attempting to implement the larger plan of his or her deity. Additionally, the measures and tactics taken by a covenant agent within one organization could vary dramatically from those in another. For instance, a follower of Kord might see an assassination as a martial challenge to overcome and care little for collateral damage if the adversaries are a worthy addition to the challenge, whereas a follower of Ioun might prefer to find another means of accomplishing the same goal that involves taking out only the intended target. The skills a covenant agent learns are tools: The individual agent must determine which tool is appropriate for the task at hand.

What follows includes a background to use if you wish to take the covenant agent paragon path (presented later in the article), new powers for both assassins and avengers, and new feats.

Background

If you want to make the covenant that an agent forms with his or her religious organization an important part of your character's background, consider choosing the background presented below.

Holy Killer Options

If you choose the holy killer background, ask your DM if you can select the following benefit.
✦ Gain a +2 bonus to skills associated with your background

Holy Killer: As a trained practitioner of deception, you have spent a good portion of your life in service to your temple as an information broker and eradicator. Mastering the intricacies of conversational encounters, you can learn exactly what you need to hunt and slay your prey. Why did you decide to answer a call to become a killer? Do you fear that you will face internal struggles regarding your work? And, if your religion does not normally condone killing others, do you feel redemption will be given one day for your acts? How do you feel about your religion in this case?

Associated Skills: Diplomacy, Insight

Assassin Powers

Covenant agents who are assassins can make use of the following powers.

Level 2 Utility Hex

Contrivance of Speed — Assassin Utility 2

Your deft speed and skill allow you to move around combat effortlessly.

Daily ✦ Shadow, Stance
Minor Action
Effect: You enter the contrivance of speed stance. Until the stance ends, you can shift 2 squares as a move action.

Level 6 Utility Hex

Shadow Adept — Assassin Utility 6

You have mastered the art of bending light, which makes you extremely difficult to locate.

Encounter ✦ Shadow
Immediate Interrupt
Trigger: You are hidden and become no longer hidden from an enemy.
Effect: You teleport 3 squares to a space where you have cover or concealment from an enemy and can make a Stealth check to hide.

Level 10 Utility Hex

Vaporous Step — Assassin Utility 10

A swift prayer enhances the prowess of your group.

Daily ✦ Shadow
Move Action
Target: You and each ally within 5 squares of you
Effect: The target shifts 2 squares as a free action.
Sustain Move: You and each ally within 5 squares gains the effects of this power again.

Avenger Powers

Avengers can take on a position as a covenant agent within their religions, and the following powers help provide them with further tools to carry out the will of their chosen deity.

Level 2 Utility Prayer

Holy Blessing — Avenger Utility 2

Kissing your holy symbol, you momentarily consider your next prey and how best to attack it.

Encounter ✦ Divine
Free Action **Close** burst 10
Trigger: Your *oath of enmity* target drops to 0 hit points
Target: One other enemy within range.
Effect: You use *oath of enmity* on the target. Until the end of your next turn, the target grants combat advantage to you.

Level 6 Utility Prayer

Prayer of Sacrifice — Avenger Utility 6

You are unwilling to fail your god and make a personal sacrifice to help ensure your success with the task at hand.

Daily ✦ Divine, Stance
Minor Action **Personal**
Effect: You enter the sacrificial prayer stance. Until the stance ends, when you miss all targets with an encounter attack power, you can choose to take 10 damage that cannot be reduced or negated by any means. If you do so, you regain the use of the encounter attack power.

Reconciling the Divine and Shadow

It might seem incongruous for a character to embrace both the divine and shadow power sources. One involves gaining power from devotion to a deity, while the other involves carving out a piece of your soul and giving it over to the Shadowfell. It almost goes without saying that an individual who can reconcile these two disparate ideals is rare.

But devotion—and especially devotion to an agent as demanding as most deities—requires sacrifice. For some, this comes in the form of a code of conduct, such as those followed by many paladins. For others, it involves spreading the word of the deity's power—or wrath. And for others, it involves an even greater sacrifice. These individuals, to best advance the causes their patron espouses, are willing to give up a piece of themselves in a way few can fathom. They freely sacrifice a portion of their soul to the fathomless, hungry darkness of the Shadowfell. In service to the divine, they make this gift willingly, and wear the title of covenant agent proudly.

Feats

The following feats can provide a covenant agent with enhanced ways of dealing with unique situations.

Heroic Tier Feats

The following feats are suitable for any character who meets the prerequisites.

Death Sight

Prerequisite: Assassin

Benefit: Bloodied creatures do not gain the benefit of cover and concealment against your attacks.

Deific Instrument

Prerequisite: Assassin, avenger

Benefit: You can use a holy symbol as an implement for assassin attack powers.

Oathbound Stalker

Prerequisite: Assassin, avenger, *oath of enmity* power

Benefit: When you teleport, you can add 2 squares to your teleport distance as long as you teleport adjacent to your *oath of enmity* target.

Vengeful Shade

Prerequisite: Assassin, any divine class, *assassin's shroud* power

Benefit: When you invoke your shrouds when using a divine attack power, you can choose to have the damage from *assassin's shroud* be radiant damage.

Covenant Agent

"You never know when the hand of a god will intercede directly in your life—or death."

Prerequisite: Assassin, avenger, either the *oath of enmity* or *assassin's shroud* power

Covenant agents are elite killers who are trained to deal precision strikes against enemies of their god with little to no detection. As a loyal member of your chosen deity, you have already learned skills that make you a prime candidate for taking on the mantle of covenant agent. How you got to this point varies and is based on your religion's structure (or lack thereof), and what goals you accomplish in the name of your god can also vary greatly from any other covenant agent's goals.

You already know how to kill. It's not a question of skill in that area, nor does anyone question your commitment to kill when needed. Now, however, you are fully invested in being a weapon used by your chosen deity. You spend countless hours honing your skills in stealth, subterfuge, and unconventional stratagem, plus you must tend to your normal commitments to your religious patron and maintain whatever façade you have chosen. Your path is one of secrecy—none outside your religious organization should learn of your ties to it. This can place pressures on you that those with whom you travel do not understand. As far as they know, you are what you choose to present to them, whether that's a light-hearted adventurer seeking treasure or a stoic combat veteran who just happens to know a few extremely effective ways to deal with those seeking your blood.

Covenant Agent Path Features

Bleeding Defeat Action (11th level): When you spend an action point to make an attack, if that attack hits and deals damage, the target also takes ongoing 10 radiant and necrotic damage (save ends).

Shadow of the Gods (11th level): Once per turn when you deal necrotic damage or radiant damage to an enemy with an assassin attack, an avenger attack, or a covenant agent attack, the target of the damage also takes a -3 penalty to the next saving throw it makes before the end of your next turn.

Harbinger (16th level): Any creature that has one of your shrouds on it or is your *oath of enmity* target loses necrotic resistance and radiant resistance.

Covenant Agent Powers

Withering Onslaught — Covenant Agent Attack 11

Your deft speed and skill allow you to debilitate your enemy with deadly precision.

Encounter ✦ Divine, Necrotic, Radiant, Shadow, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One enemy
Attack: Dexterity vs. AC
Hit: 3[W] + Dexterity modifier necrotic and radiant damage.
Effect: You can choose to either place your *oath of enmity* effect on the target (in addition to any other creature that is already on the target of your *oath of enmity*) or subject the target to one additional shroud (as per your *assassin's shroud* power).

Precision Gait — Covenant Agent Utility 12

You skillfully stride across terrain, allowing very little to hinder your precise movement.

Daily ✦ Divine, Shadow, Stance
Move Action
Effect: You shift a number of squares equal to your speed and enter the prevision gait stance. Until the stance ends, you can shift your speed as a move action.

Covenant of Assassination — Covenant Agent Attack 20

You are a master of death, and, with one perfectly timed slice, you end the suffering of any rival.

Daily ✦ Divine, Necrotic, Radiant, Shadow, Weapon
Standard Action **Melee** weapon
Target: One creature
Attack: Dexterity vs. AC
Hit: 5[W] + Dexterity modifier necrotic and radiant damage.
Miss: Half damage.
Effect: Until the end of the encounter, you can choose to have any assassin, avenger, or covenant agent attacks you make deal necrotic and radiant damage instead of their normal damage.

About the Author

When not writing for Dungeons & Dragons®, **Matt James** is chained to his desk working endlessly on developing his website: Loremaster (http://www.loremaster.org). You can also follow him on Twitter at www.twitter.com/matt_james_rpg.

by Bill Slavicsek

Demons, Beholders, and Other Things ...

... that Go Bump in the Night

As we approach the summer season, I'm gathering more and more stuff to share with Insiders. This month, for example, in addition to my usual round of reminders and updates, I'm going to show off a choice bit of the upcoming *Demonomicon* as well as provide details on a special collector's item we're rolling out later this year. Let's get to it!

This Month's Picks

Make sure you get to your local game store this month to check out our newest Dungeons & Dragons releases. *The Plane Above: Secrets of the Astral Sea* explores the realm of gods and dominions in exquisite detail. It features key locations, new monsters, adventure hooks, hazards, and more that can be dropped into any D&D campaign. And for something a little different, look for *Three Dragon Ante: Emperor's Gambit*. This sequel to our smash card game can be played alone or combined with the original *Three Dragon Ante* to create a whole new experience. And it's full of dragons! Try a game and you'll be hooked!

Dungeons & Dragons Encounters

Our new in-store organized play program is going strong, and it's never too late to hop into the action. Every Wednesday, a new part of the Undermountain adventure unfolds. If you haven't dropped by yet, I have to tell you that the energy level at the ongoing event is amazingly high, and everyone I've spoken to or heard from who's played can't wait to go back and play again. For a location near you, visit our Retailer Locator.

Also, we're currently running a retail promotion for stores running Encounters. If you're store isn't participating, encourage the store owner or manager to get involved.

Beholders Collector's Set

This fall, we're rolling out a very limited edition of the Beholders Collector's Set. This set of four large Beholder miniatures comes in cool packaging that can be used as a display case. Note that three of the Beholders are new types right out of *Monster Manual 3* that have never been created in plastic before. The availability will be along the lines of our From the Vault products for Magic: The Gathering. You'll only be able to find these sets at your local hobby store and only while supplies last. The MSRP is $34.99. Watch for more information on this limited edition item as we get closer to its release date.

Here Demon, Demon, Demon!

For my sneak peek this month, I decided to delve into the upcoming *Demonomicon*, which releases in July. I just grabbed some pieces that I found interesting. Here they are, in no particular order. Enjoy!

The Demonomicon of Iggwilv

FROM THE DEMONOMICON OF IGGWILV

Many are they who would gladly have prostrated themselves before me, promising their fortunes, their families, their very souls to possess the tome you now hold in your hands. No matter how powerful you believe yourself to be, no matter how great your claim to knowledge—on matters of demon lore, you are a rank novice in my sight.

Demons are not a class of creature easily codified, and no amount of vellum and ink can possibly hope to catalog their innumerable attributes and permutations. The research collected in this Demonomicon is accurate and impeccable, I assure you. But entering into battle against a demon requires more than mere knowledge. For demons are creatures of chaos—mutable and forever adapting to their environment. A tactic employed successfully against an abyssal horde one time might result in your utter destruction the next.

Although you might have gained temporary possession of my precious tome, you still stand to gain only an inkling of the innermost workings of demonkind—a subject I have lived and breathed over uncounted centuries of life. Was it unwise to set hard-won knowledge to parchment so sneak thieves such as yourself could steal away with it? Perhaps. But unless you are a special kind of fool, you know that I am already hunting you. So find what wisdom you can in these pages, for the time in which it might serve you is short. . . .

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Six volumes of the legendary *Demonomicon of Iggwilv* are known to exist, all of which have changed hands many times over long centuries. This vile codex held the dark secrets of Iggwilv's dominance over more than a dozen abyssal lords; numerous wizards and sages have sought to equal that power by gaining access to all six tomes. As yet, none has succeeded.

The *Demonomicon* is said to be based on a prior work titled the *Tome of Zyx*, written by the legendary archmage and former mentor of Iggwilv, Zagig Yragerne. The *Demonomicon* represents the Witch Queen's primary repository of demonic knowledge, drawn from a multitude of years spent plumbing the hidden depths of the Abyss and from her personal interactions with the demon lords themselves.

Each volume is a heavy, brassbound tome of parchment pages set with clawed clasps. Dark covers crafted from demon leather and sinew bind and protect the profane lore within. Beyond its invaluable information regarding the Abyss and its inhabitants, the *Demonomicon* contains secret lore for summoning and binding demon lords, unique rituals for crafting permanent demongates, and spells and prayers of the utmost evil.

Demonic Physiology

From the Demonomicon of Iggwilv

Demon physiology is fascinating beyond measure. I know of no other type of creature in the cosmos that so rapidly and thoroughly adapts to its environment. Take a fiery immolith and drop it in the frigid expanses of the Iron Wastes. Come back in a few months, and you will discover the immolith's shroud of flame replaced by an aura of bitter frost. Return a few years hence and you'll likely find a demon closer in appearance and power to a jarrlak than the creature of fire you left behind. Many, many times I have repeated this experience, each in a different abyssal layer and all with similar results. If I locked him away for a span of years in the Forest of Living Tongues, I wonder what form my beloved Graz'zt would eventually take?

No one knows exactly how or why the first demons took form. Some sages believe that the fusion of the shard of evil and the physical instability inherent in the Elemental Chaos was the catalyst that spawned demonkind. Others believe that the shard of absolute evil was, in fact, the aggregate of the wasted souls of much of the obyrith race. When that evil fused with the Elemental Chaos, a new kind of creature was spawned. Whatever the case, the physiology of the demon is dramatically different from that of any other creature.

Demonic Monster Themes

Demons are born of the raw essence of chaos, and their wide range of features and powers reflects this chaos. Although individual demons of the same type resemble each other, this chaotic nature can manifest in differences between them. Likewise, creatures tainted by demonic power can adopt a dizzying array of new abilities and twisted forms.

The demonic themes presented in this section provide a DM with tools to customize demons, creating variations on the standard creatures presented in the *Monster Manual* and other supplements. These themes can also be used to give fiendish qualities to nondemons, reflecting the way in which the Abyss warps all life that dwells there.

In addition to the themes presented here, Chapter 4 of *Dungeon Master's Guide 2* presents three themes designed for servants of the lords of the Abyss: the Demogorgon cultist, Lolth's chosen, and the Orcus blood cultist.

Using Themes

Applying a monster theme allows you to customize an existing monster's role and powers. The process is like applying a template, but it is much simpler and does not require rebuilding a monster's statistics block. You can run the monster with only a few notes jotted in the margin to detail its additional features.

Step 1: Choose a Theme

The themes presented in this section allow you to grant a specific flavor to the servants of a particular demon lord. For example, vrocks that serve Dagon can feel and act different from vrocks bound to Pazuzu. Specialized themes can also be used to customize mortal demon cultists or spellcasters who bind demons to their service.

Step 2: Choose a Monster

After you've selected the monster theme, choose the monster you want to modify. You might select a monster appropriate for the theme or choose one that best fits a specific encounter or adventure.

Some themes work better with particular types of creatures or monster roles. Each theme describes the roles it fits best. You can modify creatures of other roles with one of those powers, but the modified monster takes on some of the feel of the role described with the power. This doesn't change the monster so much that its original role changes.

Some powers grant a monster the leader role, as noted in the text. Powers that do not reference a specific role are suitable for all creatures.

Step 3: Choose Story Changes

A theme is more than a menu of new powers. It's also a story template that you can use to turn a mundane creature into a unique opponent. It's easy to forget description and story elements when assembling a monster's statistics and powers, but story plays an important role in how a monster functions in a game. A monster without a good story is just a collection of numbers and can result in forgettable encounters.

When adding a theme to a monster, take note of any changes to its appearance or behavior. These changes should reflect both the monster's altered powers and its new allegiance to a specific demon lord.

Choosing story changes can take place after choosing new powers if that works better for you. In fact, some powers might suggest particular story changes and vice versa, so jump back and forth between Step 3 and Step 4 as you need to.

Step 4: Choose Powers

Each theme adds a number of powers to the monster you've chosen to rework.

Choose one attack power and one utility power from the theme and add them to the monster's statistics block. You can also apply the theme's skill modifications, though this is optional.

Avoid the temptation to pile on new powers. Adding more than two new powers to a monster not only makes it more complicated to run (potentially slowing down combat), it risks increasing the creature's effectiveness in combat beyond its normal level.

Most powers use the level of the creature they are applied to for calculating attack rolls and damage rolls. Melee attack powers marked "melee reach" use the reach of the base creature's melee basic attack.

Attack Powers: Each theme includes a number of different attack powers. Some give a monster a new attack or the ability to impose some debilitating effect on its foes. Others powers provide enhancements to a monster's existing attack powers. Each power is written in the style of a normal monster power entry, with a header noting which part of a monster's statistics block it is added to. This is accompanied by a description of the most appropriate roles for the power, along with optional story hooks.

Utility Powers: In addition to attack powers, a theme might include options such as auras, healing powers, special movement, and situational benefits. In most cases, adding a utility power doesn't alter a monster's core identity or tactics as drastically as adding a new attack power. Possible exceptions are noted in the option's text.

Baphomet's Maze (sample power)

This power casts the target's mind into Baphomet's Endless Maze, the 600th layer of the Abyss. There, it wanders helplessly until it can escape. Baphomet commonly grants this power to oni, minotaur priests of his cults, and tomb demons. This power is best suited for controllers, and is a sign of Baphomet's utmost favor.

MINOR ACTIONS

Baphomet's Maze ✦ Encounter

Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); level + 3 vs. Will

Hit: The target is stunned (save ends). At the start of each of its turns, the target can make an Intelligence check to end the stunned effect (DC equal to 10 + this creature's level). The target gains a +5 bonus to this check for each prior failed check.

Demonic Traps and Hazards

With the Blood War in a state of dark truce, the conflict between devils and demons plays out more and more in the mortal realm. The demon cults of the world are all too eager to spread the power of their abyssal masters, and their temples and sanctuaries quickly become polluted by dark magic.

This section presents new hazards and traps for use in designing demonic encounters, and it describes features commonly found in the temples and shrines of worldly demon cults.

Pillars of Chaos

The inner precincts of many demonic temples are lined with pillars carved to reflect the visages of their abyssal lords. The magic of these pillars presents a potent obstacle to any creatures that trespass.

Pillars of Chaos **Level 4 Obstacle**
Trap **XP 175**

The pillars set around this chamber are covered with leering demonic faces, their eyes seeming to follow you as you move.

Trap: Planar energy infuses the pillars of chaos, hurling victims randomly throughout the chamber. Six pillars make up this trap, each of which occupies 1 square.

Perception

No Perception check is necessary to notice the pillars.

Additional Skill: Arcana

✦ DC 12: These pillars are infused with the planar energy of the Abyss.

✦ DC 17: The pillars of chaos warp space around them. Demons can use the power of the pillars to teleport, but other creatures are drawn through the teleportation field at random.

Trigger

A pillar attacks whenever a nondemon starts its turn adjacent to it.

Attack

Opportunity Action **Close** burst 1 centered on the pillar adjacent to the triggering creature

Target: The triggering creature

Attack: +7 vs. Fortitude

Hit: The target is teleported to an unoccupied square adjacent to one of the trap's other pillars, determined randomly.

Special: As a move action, a demon adjacent to a pillar of chaos can teleport to any unoccupied space it can see adjacent to another pillar of chaos.

Countermeasures

- A character adjacent to a pillar of chaos can make a DC 17 Arcana check (as a move action) to control the trap's teleportation field. On a successful check, the character teleports to any unoccupied square it can see adjacent to another pillar of chaos.
- A character can attack a pillar to destroy it (AC 5, Reflex 5, Fortitude 10, 30 hit points). Destroying all the pillars ends this trap's threat.

ABYSSAL SCAVENGER

Abyssal Scavengers are thought of as vermin in their native realm—a reputation that inspires these horrors to seek easy hunting grounds in the mortal world. Creating strength in numbers, a pack of abyssal scavengers can quickly lay waste to even the largest humanoid settlements.

Lore

Arcana DC 15: Like all demons, abyssal scavengers live to destroy. In contrast to most of their kind, scavengers consume the creatures they kill in order to spawn hatchlings. In the Abyss, their numbers are kept in check by the voracious appetites of demons more powerful than they are. An infestation of scavengers in the world can quickly multiply to overwhelm humanoid settlements.

These creatures are also known for a deadly side effect of their insatiable appetites. Each scavenger carries a mote of the raw essence of the Abyss within it. If significant numbers of scavengers gather in tight quarters, their abyssal essence can consume them, leaving a demongate in its wake. Such gates rarely last for long, but they can touch any layer of the Abyss. Other demons take advantage of these temporary crossings to the mortal world, and what began as an infestation of relatively weak scavengers can quickly become a full-scale demonic invasion.

Encounters

Few sane spellcasters attempt to summon abyssal scavengers, for fear that their numbers will quickly grow out of control. These creatures' potential to create demongates does. however, make them a favorite target of summoning rituals by apocalyptic cults of Demogorgon and Oublivae.

Abyssal Scavenger	**Level 2 Skirmisher (Leader)**
Small elemental beast (demon)	**XP 125**
HP 34; **Bloodied** 17	**Initiative** +6
AC 16, **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 13	**Perception** +2
Speed 8	Low-light vision
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Claw ✦ At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC *Hit:* 1d8 + 5 damage.	
⸸ **Frenzied Claw ✦ At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC *Hit:* 1d8 + 5 damage, and any other scavenger within 5 squares of the target can shift 2 squares toward the target as a free action.	
Move Actions	
⇜ **Scuttle ✦ At-Will**	
Effect: The scavenger shifts 3 squares.	
Triggered Actions	
Death Shriek	
Trigger: The scavenger drops to 0 hit points.	
Effect (No Action): Close burst 3 (creatures in burst); any scavenger in the burst can make a melee basic attack as a free action.	
Variable Resistance ✦ Encounter	
Trigger: The scavenger takes acid, cold, fire, lightning, or thunder damage.	
Effect (Free Action): The scavenger gains resist 5 to the triggering damage type until the end of the encounter.	
Skills Stealth +9	
Str 13 (+2) **Dex** 16 (+4) **Wis** 13 (+2)	
Con 10 (+1) **Int** 3 (-3) **Cha** 10 (+1)	
Alignment chaotic evil; **Languages** –	

Abyssal Scavengers in Combat

Abyssal scavengers attack together, staying close to maximize the effect of frenzied claw and death shriek. A scavenger becomes more animated and aggressive with each foe that drops to its allies' attacks.

In Case You Don't Know Him

Bill Slavicsek's gaming life was forever changed when he discovered Dungeons & Dragons in 1976. He became a gaming professional in 1986 when he was hired by West End Games as an editor. He quickly added developer, designer, and creative manager to his resume, and his work helped shape the *Paranoia*, *Ghostbusters*, *Star Wars*, and *Torg* roleplaying games. He even found some time during that period to do freelance work for D&D 1st Edition. In 1993, Bill joined the staff of TSR, Inc. as a designer/editor. He worked on a bunch of 2nd Edition material, including products for Core D&D, *Dark Sun*, *Ravenloft*, and *Planescape*. In 1997, he was part of the TSR crowd that moved to Seattle to join Wizards of the Coast, and in that year he was promoted to R&D Director for D&D. In that position, Bill oversaw the creation of both the 3rd Edition and 4th Edition of the D&D Roleplaying Game. He was one of the driving forces behind the *D&D Insider* project, and he continues to oversee and lead the creative strategy and effort for Dungeons & Dragons.

Bill's enormous list of credits includes *Alternity*, *d20 Modern*, *d20 Star Wars*, *Pokemon Jr.*, *Eberron Campaign Setting*, the *D&D For Dummies* books, and his monthly *Ampersand (&)* column for *Dragon* Magazine.

That's it for this month. Until next time,

Keep Playing!

Confessions of an Overwhelmed Duckling

BY SHELLY MAZZANOBLE
illustrations by William O'Conner

I must confess. Sometimes I'm a bit insecure. And no, not in the predictable "does this belt of vig*or* make my butt look fat?" way. And certainly not in the "Holy cow, is the wait staff looking at me funny because I just devoured two baskets of chips, a grande burrito, and fried ice cream?" way that I probably should be. I'm talking about playmat insecurity. Yes, that's right. Your Player-in-Chief sometimes lacks confidence in her PC prowess.

The sorts of things that get me include: Could I have negotiated a better deal from our patron and gotten the party more gold pieces? Did I give up too much info to the armed guards and put the party in danger? Should I stand here? Or here? What about over there? Should I make an Arcana check? Or History? Or just wait for New DM to ask for a Perception check.

So mostly, I stick with what I know. It's all *scorching burst* this and *magic missile* that. But why am I so uptight? It's just a game, right? Just like dancing was supposed to be just a hobby, but now I'm terrified of being a duck!

Right. I guess I should explain that.

When I was four my mom enrolled me in dance classes. This was after the "Balance Beam Blunder" but before the "Diving Board Disaster." I really wanted to be a dancer like the ones on *Solid Gold,* and Mom loved the idea of starting me early in something that could potentially get me a college scholarship. I don't remember the classes, which probably explains what happened at the much-anticipated recital. *That*, I remember, thanks in part to the pictures. The radioactive yellow ducky costume with white bobby socks and chunky tap shoes. My hands over my head while everyone else's were down. Me pirouetting when the other girls step ball changed. Their feet stomped while my fingers snapped. That's the day I gave up my dream of becoming a *Solid Gold* dancer, and Mom opened a college fund.

I tried to be a good duck, but there were just too many moves to remember. I figured it would be better to forgo learning the entire routine in favor of getting really, really good at one or two things like pirouetting and finger snapping.

And here I am, many years later, feeling like that 4-year-old duck when I play D&D. I *want* to be a more strategic player. I *want* to maximize Tabitha's powers.

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I *want* to help the party solve puzzles and reap rewards. And yet, sometimes I choose to have Tabitha cast *scorching burst* because I know she's good at it. I can attack and roll damage without once referencing my character sheet.

Here's another secret. After Tabitha and company leveled and I retrieved my freshly minted character sheet from the printer, I looked at it. I mean, *really* looked at it. Hmm . . . when did I get *wizard's escape*? Oh yeah, I have a *shield*! I double-checked to make sure this character sheet said "Tabitha Sparkles." I guess I always thought my fellow party members just had more options than I did. I thought maybe wizards were minimalists. But now it was abundantly clear. Tabby is packing. I just didn't know it.

I know there are programs on my computer I've never bothered to learn to use. There's probably an app on my phone that does even cooler things than I use it for. There might be buttons on my remote control that do my laundry, pay the bills, and turn cats into pots of gold for all I know. But those don't impact things like the health and safety of my fellow party members.

For instance, in a recent session, Bart's kenku Holden was getting his feathers handed to him. The poor little birdman was down to single digit hit points, out of encounter and daily powers, and was the only party member left that could offer some healing. He was only 5 squares from Tabitha and marked by a mezzodemon, which was how Tabby managed to creep by it to find a bit of cover. One more decent hit and Holden would be a McKenku Nugget. You know what would have been cool? If *someone* had cast *invisibility* on Holden to give him a chance to get out of harm's way. It turns out Tabby *could* have, if she bothered looking at her spell list once in a while. Instead she tossed a wimpy *scorching burst* at the offending monster, dealing maybe 7 damage. Holden survived, but no thanks to me.

This is all cathartic, so pardon me while I continue with a full disclosure. Once in a while, Tabitha gets close enough to the action to actually get hit with a melee weapon. That's not the embarrassing part. My little wizard has been toting around something called *wizard's escape* in her big, old spellbook. She could have teleported away from the enemy who hit her instead of clutching her bleeding oblique and provoking an attack of opportunity when she ran away. That same spell book contains *arcane insight,* which would allow Tabitha to reroll an Arcana check. Imagine that! Instead of saying, "Sorry guys, I must been out sick the day we covered force fields," she may have been able to offer up some knowledge that would have helped the party in a skill challenge. Ugh. I hope they don't read this.

Whew! That felt good! Anyway, while I was discovering my past failings and pondering my future as a wizard, something inexplicable happens. As if Avandra herself decided to take a hand in Tabby's fate, a magical book lands on my desk. Actually I have no proof of its magical abilities, but I'm taking it as a sign anyway. It's called the *Player's Strategy Guide*. I flip the book open and read an inscription written on a Post-It note:

"Hey there," says the note. "You and Tabby might want to read this."

A gift from a secret admirer? Nice! Turning the book over, I see why.

"For Awesome Characters Only."

Of course! The back cover promises to make me the envy of my gaming group due to my jaw-droppingly awesome newfound player skillz. Wait a minute. New *player* skills? You mean my sub-par D&D proficiencies are *that* obvious? Suddenly I feel like those people who order "Flab-Be-Gone" or face freezing lotion from late night infomercials. Oh please, let this work! I dig into the first chapter right away.

It says something about why I might enjoy playing D&D. Yeah, yeah, yeah. I probably want to play more effectively. Sure, sure, whatever. Then: "On the other hand, you might be struggling with the number of options available to your character."

Whoa! This is a sign. Already I'm starting to feel better. If R&D wrote a whole book about this topic, then surely there have to be more of us out there, right?

"What are you reading?" my boss asked, walking by my desk.

"Nothing!" I answer, snapping the book shut. Why am I being so defensive? Am I not allowed to read the books we publish? It's not like I'm reading *US Weekly* or *How to Deal with Ineffective Leadership* or something. But sometimes you don't want to let anyone in on your quest for self-improvement until you know it's going to work. Plus my boss is in my game. If I forget to use *shield* again, that could show up on my review. Better that she, and the rest of the Wyld Stallyns, stay in the dark a little longer.

In the safety of my own home I returned to studying.

Tabitha doesn't have to be perfect. Just like the little duckling Shelly didn't have to perform every step perfectly. But there are similarities between a dance recital and a D&D party. You should be in synch.

Each person should have a role. If one falters, plays half-assed, or goes rogue during an encounter, you all suffer for it. (You might also laugh your face off like my brother did. There are pictures of that, too.)

Is Tabitha really the best possible character she can be? Not according to Chapter 1. I mean, sure, she's got a backstory—that was one of the first things New DM tasked us with before we even sat down to play as a group—but does she have goals? Career ambitions? An epic destiny? I didn't know she needed one!

At least I'm doing something right. The book recommends you, "shop for particularly utilitarian or extraordinary flamboyant clothing." Finally! My work as Player-in-Chief has paid off. It then goes on to say, "Come up with a couple of interesting possessions to wear or carry." This must be a nod to Tabby getting a new outfit or accessory every time we finish an adventure. She's been dressed by the best—bracers by Hershey, robes by Cote D'Or, feather boa by . . . well. . . someone's Halloween costume.

I skip ahead to the section about choosing powers. Tabby kills stuff, so I must be at least moderately proficient in that aspect. It turns out, nope. Apparently my method of choosing spells based on maximum dice of damage isn't always the best option. Perhaps this is why most of my daily and encounter powers are fire-based. That's great if you're only going to fight stacks of dry logs and marshmallows, but maybe not the best defense when you're fighting a fire elemental. Maybe I should look into swapping some out in exchange for powers that will round out the types of damage Tabby can dish.

And clearly I have issues with utility powers. You'd think something that basically promises to be useful would be easier to remember. *Arcane insight, invisibility, wizard's escape, shield*. Yep. Pretty useful. And with the exception of *invisibility* they're all encounter powers. Who picked these? Remember that fight I mentioned earlier? The one where only Holden and Tabby were left standing and both of us were getting beat up from all angles? My *shield* may have prevented enough damage for me to sustain Tabitha's *flaming sphere* and keep attacking the naga rather than spend a healing surge.

So it's pretty clear I need to develop mission statements for Tabitha.

Mission Statement #1: Examine utility powers and learn what they do.

Mission Statement #2: Use them!

To be honest, at this point I kind of wish I had a *scorching burst* right now so I could scorch away this depressing book. Or maybe fry some ice cream. Not since the Great Duck Debacle have I felt so poorly about myself. But just as my spirits hit rock bottom, I saw a beacon of hope: Quizzes! How would I have ever known what kind of friend I am or what my purse says about me without quizzes?

I open right up to the "What Class Are You?" quiz. Hmm. . . maybe I've been playing this all wrong? The fantasy me has always been drawn to magic users because the real me loves a little slight of hand. Unfortunately the quiz does little to quell my concerns. Out of ten questions I scored three points each under ranger, rogue, and wizard, and one point under paladin. (How did *that* get in there?) For the record, question four about my wardrobe didn't have any appropriate answers. A taxidermy shop? Maybe R&D should have consulted me before coming up with these answers.

I was hoping the "What Race Are You" quiz would be a bit more telling, but instead it depressed me. Out of the eight races, I scored one point in every category *except* tiefling and scored the highest in my least favorite race: human. (I don't understand the desire to play a human in D&D when you already play one in real life.) Basically, these quizzes only proved what I already knew: Tabitha might be one cocky tiefling, but Shelly is one conflicted human.

Reading on, I come across something I hadn't heard since my Introduction to Acting class back in college: *What's Your Motivation?* Well, what *is* my motivation? To stay alive? To have a good time? To not get Kierin's character, Aaeon, caught in Tabby's bursts or blasts again? According to this quiz, I'm once again at odds, this time between a *thinker* and a *slayer*. What does that mean? I daydream about how to blow up monsters but seldom act on it? I do spend a lot of time fretting over which spell to use. And let's be honest: Encounter powers are the equivalent of TSA regulations on liquids. I now live in fear of running out of conditioner 537 miles from my bathroom and using up *shock sphere* 537 feet below ground. And don't even get me started on daily powers.

Time to study up for class. My wizard class that is. *Thinkers fit best with controller classes*. Finally, a sign my seven levels with Tabitha have not been in vain. But I'm disturbed by what it says about wizards under hidden talents: "the widest range of problem-solving options of any character." Tabitha? Has she ever solved a problem? Not single-handedly, but I realize that's my fault. While she's trained in Diplomacy, Insight, and Intimidate (not to mention travels with a show bear who gives her a +2 on Intimidate checks) she is seldom the one to start up critical negotia-

tions. But that's me metagaming, rather than possibly (probably) playing in character. I don't want to say the wrong thing. But Tabitha wouldn't be so urbane. In fact, if I actually *roleplayed* her she'd be saying the wrong thing all the time. How's that for zero pressure? Play a character without a censor! She's gruff and intimidating and would rather make you pee your pants than compliment them. I gave her that backstory, yet I'm afraid to use it. I don't need to show up at our games in a feather boa and horns, but I do need to start thinking like a hot-headed tiefling.

Mission Statement #3: Get into character.

I continue to study. According to the *PSG*, if a player is already feeling overwhelmed, perhaps mastering the powers and knowledge they already have should come before taking on even more. But what fun is that? A long time ago, Tabitha went and got herself all multiclassed as a warlock. Oh, I never mentioned that? Well, that's probably because I have no idea what to do with her fancy warlock sophistication. It's the same sort of impulse that keep me buying overprocessed juice at Safeway instead of reading the stupid instructions that go with my big, fancy overpriced juicer so I can make my own! I don't even like juice that much! And Tabby doesn't really like *hellish rebuke*. Fortunately *Player's Strategy Guide* is all about asking for help—from your DM, your party, your buddies down in R&D. Maybe Tabby should ditch her dreams of becoming a warlock and concentrate on becoming a really good wizard. And maybe I should figure out how to make a smoothie at home. That leads me to:

Mission Statement #4: Use it or lose it.

Here's a topic my group continues to debate: When ten monsters are spread out on the playmat, is it better to split up and target multiple enemies or focus all of our efforts on one? Just like it's hard to resist buying two dozen rolls of paper towels at Costco (I may not *need* that many rolls at the time and have nowhere to put them, but I'll never have to buy them again), sometimes it's hard for Tabby to resist dropping a big, flaming orb on a gaggle of baddies. That's kind of the point of a burst and blast, right? But if there's not a grouping or a clear leader of the bad guys, we're all over the place, knocking over bookshelves and jumping over sarcophaguses and firing at whomever is closest. Apparently, this sort of tactic is a little counterproductive. Right. If common sense didn't tell you that, simple math should. There's a whole chapter in this book on strategy and tactics, and I'm about to read it for the fourth time. And I add the following to my list:

Mission Statement #5: Think before you detonate.

Tabby might not be a sequin-adorned dancing duck, but she's certainly a quack. I feel like I just completed my first year of wizardry grad school and there's still more studying to do. I haven't even gotten to the "Don't Be a Jerk" section of Chapter 4 (sorry, New DM), but I'm certainly inspired to try out some of my newfound wisdom in the coming weeks. It looks like Tabby needs to learn the whole routine. Snapping your fingers only gets you so far.

To be continued...

About the Author

Inspired by Tabitha's make-over, **Shelly Mazzanoble** decided to take a dance class, which ended badly when the teacher scolded her for trying to bully 4 year-olds into pirouetting and finger snapping instead of those lame moves they were being forced to learn.

Deck of Many Things

by Bart Carroll and Steve Winter

Pick a card, any card...

With *Dragon* Magazine's release of the 4th Edition *Deck of Many Things*, *D&D Alumni* was compelled to cover the history of this powerful item. Personally, it ranks among this author's favorite magic items, along with the *bag of tricks* and *wand of wonder*—magic items that offer a veritable lottery of effects. This randomizing element provided the appeal (oddly enough) of these items, at least to me: some results might be helpful, some less so... and in the case of the *Deck*, some results could be outright calamitous, including the loss of one's life, soul, or every last possession.

By their nature in the game, magic items are desired because they're decidedly and definitively helpful, the exceptions being the cursed items of past editions (whose return I campaign for wholeheartedly). Yet for all their uncertainty of results ("both beneficial and baleful"), it's precisely this gamble that makes the *Deck of Many Things* so wonderfully compelling.

A Little Historical Background

A deck of cards ranks among the more familiar items in fantasy—not to the same extent as the more iconic sword, shield, or crown, but somewhere on a similar level of, say, magic boots, a sack of gold, or a talking animal. This is perhaps most famously personified in *Alice in Wonderland*'s Queen of Hearts. Also consider the first three books in Michael Moorcock's tales of Corum, *The Knight of the Swords*, *The Queen of the Swords*, and *The King of the Swords*; the use of trumps to communicate and travel instantly in the *Chronicles of Amber*; and countless tales of mortals either playing or cutting cards with the Devil for ownership of their souls. This association even carries over to this day—no stage magician is without his deck of cards, and card tricks are usually the first type of illusion an aspiring magician learns.

Tarot cards—appearing throughout medieval Europe—have long been entwined with divination, alchemy and mysticism (not to mention as images featured on two of this author's tattoos), as well as ostensibly for gaming; the tarot's swords, staffs, cups, and coins theoretically became modern playing cards' diamonds, clubs, spades, and hearts. Tarot decks have also made their appearance in literature, everywhere from Stephen King's *The Gunslinger* to J.K. Rowlings' *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*.

When it comes to cards in Dungeons & Dragons, it's fairly easy to imagine the game's creators incorporating materials at hand into their sessions. After all, Gary Gygax wrote dime store toy monsters into the game as the rust monster, owlbear, and bullete. A standard 6-sided die might have been employed as the first *cube of force* or *cubic gate*. Similarly, a deck of cards might have been offered, enticing players to draw one and test their luck.

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Supplement 1

The first *Deck of Many Things* appeared as far back as *Supplement 1: Greyhawk*, a slightly truncated version—only 18 unnamed cards—with the following effects (and the playing cards used to represent them; AH=Ace of Hearts, and so on):

AH	Immediately gain 50,000 experience points.
KH	Gain miscellaneous magical item of the player's choice.
QH	Gain 1d3 wishes to be taken when the player likes.
JH	Help from a high-level warrior with +3 armor, shield, and sword for one hour when you call for him.
AD	Immediately gain map to richest treasure on any dungeon level.
KD	Gain 5d6 pieces of jewelry immediately.
QD	Gain scroll of seven spells with no 1st-level spells on it.
JD	Add one point to any ability score.
AS	Lose one experience level immediately.
KS	A high-level warrior with +4 armor, shield, and sword attacks you.
QS	Immediate death, no saving throw.
JS	Monster from the Gray Waste attacks by surprise.
AC	Change alignment immediately (randomly).
KC	Lose your most prized magical item immediately.
QC	Turn to stone, no saving throw.
JC	Lose 1 point from your Prime Requisite.
J (2)	Gain 25,000 experience points immediately or select two additional cards.

1st Edition

From the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, this next iteration had expanded to 22 named cards:

"A *deck of many things* (beneficial and baneful) usually is found contained within a box or leather pouch. Each *deck* contains a number of thin plaques or plates. These sheets are usually of ivory or vellum. Each is engraved and/or inscribed with glyphs, characters, and magical sigils. As soon as one of these sheets is drawn forth from the pack, its magic is bestowed upon the person who drew it, for better or worse. The character gaining a *deck of many things* may announce that only 1 will be drawn from the pack, or he or she may opt to draw forth 2, 3, or even 4, but the number must be announced prior to the first plaque withdrawn. Note that if the jester is drawn, the possessor of the *deck* may elect to draw 2 additional cards. Each time a plaque is taken from the *deck* it is replaced unless the draw is a jester or fool, in which case the plaque is discarded from the pack."

A few explanatory notes. Drawing the Key meant rolling on the treasure map table (located earlier in the *DMG*) with +20%:

Dice Result
01-05: False map
06-70: Map to monetary treasure
71-90: Map to magic treasure
91-00: Map to a combined hoard

As with so very many things in the 1st Edition *DMG*, a wonderful surplus of tables and extraneous writing helped flesh out this simple chart. For example, treasure shown on the map would be:

01-10: Buried and unguarded.
11-20: Hidden in water.
21-70: Guarded in a lair.
71-80: Somewhere in a ruins.
81-90: In a burial crypt.
91-00: Secreted in a town.

When it came to magic treasure, "most treasures will have magic potions, scrolls, armor and weapons. This is carefully planned so as to prevent imbalance in the game. Keep potent magic items rare. (Increase scarcity by destroying or stealing what is found!)... These are the real finds, which can satisfy even the most avaricious dwarf's greed."

Sun	KD	Gain beneficial miscellaneous magic item and 50,000 experience points.
Moon	QD	You are granted 1-4 wishes.
Star	JD	Immediately gain 2 points on your major ability.
Comet	2D	Defeat the next monster you meet to gain 1 level.
Throne	KH	Gain charisma of 18 and small keep.
Key	QH	Gain a treasure map plus 1 magic weapon.
Knight	JH	Gain the service of a 4th level fighter.
Gem	2H	Gain your choice of 20 jewelry or 50 gems.
The Void	KS	Body functions, but soul is trapped elsewhere.
Flames	QC	Enmity between you and a devil.
Skull	JC	Defeat Death or be forever destroyed.
Talons	2C	All magic items you possess are torn from you.
Ruin	KS	Immediately lose all wealth and real property.
Euryale	QS	Minus 3 on all saving throws vs. petrifaction.
Rogue	JS	One of your henchmen turns against you.
Balance	2S	Change alignment or be judged.
Jester	J	Gain 10,000 experience points or 2 more draws from the deck.
Fool	J with trademark	Lose 10,000 experience points; draw again.
Vizier	AD	Know the answer to your next dilemma
Idiot	AC	Lose 1-4 points of intelligence, you may draw again.
Fates	AH	Avoid any situation you choose... once.
Donjon	AS	You are imprisoned.

A standard deck of cards had other uses as well; the 1st Edition *DMG* also used them for the *deck of illusions*. *Dragon* Magazine #36 (June 1979) provided results for the Major Arcana in a tarot deck with its *Tarot Deck of Unalterable Fate*; *Dragon* #77 (September 1983) utilized every card in a tarot deck; and, just as with tarot readings, these results varied depending on if a card were drawn upright or reversed. For instance, upon drawing the chariot card:

Upright: The drawer is cured of all diseases, lycanthropy, deafness, blindness, curses, charms, and the like of which she or he is a victim, and will be 15% less susceptible to them from now on. Also, the drawer will be able to coax an extra 3 movement out of any vehicle, mount, or other mode of travel, as long as the drawer's mind is clear and free to concentrate.

Reversed: The drawer, over the next seven days, begins to manifest a severe and chronic disease, which can only be cured by a potion made from the brains of two different kinds of sphinxes. The disease will not prove fatal for at least 49 days.

2nd Edition

The *Deck* nearly disappeared from AD&D with 2nd Edition. That wasn't because it was monstrously random and dangerous to characters—which it certainly was—but because its randomness and power gave it the potential to destroy campaigns if DMs allowed the *Deck* to be, or were bullied into letting it be, abused. Sadly, countless letters to *Dragon* Magazine indicated that was exactly what was happening in many cases.

The *Deck* survived, though, on the philosophy that it would be used wisely, or at least cautiously, far more often than abusively.

3rd Edition

What changed with the 3rd Edition's version of the *Deck*?

While the earlier Skull card had you fighting death itself (at least a minor version: AC -4; 33 hit points; strikes with a scythe for 2-16 hit points, never missing, always striking first in a round. If the character is slain he or she is slain forever. Treat the Death as undead with respect to spells. Cold or fire do not harm it, neither does electrical energy.), this version became an unturnable dread wraith.

Likewise, drawing the Flames originally created an enmity between you and a greater devil (possibly even an arch-devil... so good luck with that encounter); in this version, you simply angered some undefined outsider.

Yet the spirit of the cards remained the same. In all versions, the Vizier gave you an answer, the Fates let you avoid some situation, and the Donjon left a character stripped of his possessions and imprisoned. You could now also use select cards from a tarot deck to represent the many things:

Plaque	Tarot Card	Playing Card	Summary of Effect
Balance	Justice	Two of spades	Change alignment instantly.
Comet	Two of swords	Two of diamonds	Defeat the next monster you meet to gain one level.
Donjon	Four of swords	Ace of spades	You are imprisoned.
Euryale	Ten of swords	Queen of spades	-1 penalty on all saving throws henceforth.
The Fates	Three of cups	Ace of hearts	Avoid any situation you choose... once.
Flames	The Devil	Queen of clubs	Enmity between you and an outsider.
Fool	The Fool	Joker (with trademark)	Lose 10,000 experience points and you must draw again.
Gem	Seven of cups	Two of hearts	Gain your choice of twenty-five pieces of jewelry or fifty gems.
Idiot	Two of pentacles	Two of clubs	Lose Intelligence (permanent drain). You may draw again.
Jester	The Hanged Man	Joker (without trademark)	Gain 10,000 XP or two more draws from the deck.
Key	The Hierophant	Queen of hearts	Gain a major magic weapon.
Knight	Page of swords	Jack of hearts	Gain the service of a 4th-level fighter.
Moon	The Moon	Queen of diamonds	You are granted 1d4 wishes.
Rogue	Five of swords	Jack of spades	One of your friends turns against you.
Ruin	The Tower	King of spades	Immediately lose all wealth and real property.
Skull	Death	Jack of clubs	Defeat dread wraith or be forever destroyed.
Star	The Star	Jack of diamonds	Immediately gain a +2 inherent bonus to one ability score.
Sun	The Sun	King of diamonds	Gain beneficial medium wondrous item and 50,000 XP.
Talons	Queen of pentacles	Ace of clubs	All magic items you possess disappear permanently.
Throne	Four of staves	King of hearts	Gain a +6 bonus on Diplomacy checks plus a small keep.
Vizier	The Hermit	Ace of diamonds	Know the answer to your next dilemma.
The Void	Eight of swords	King of clubs	Body functions, but soul is trapped elsewhere.

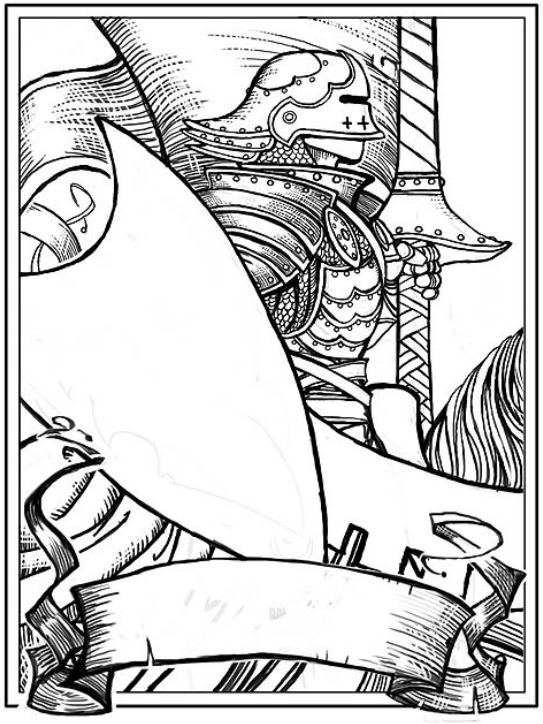
4th Edition

From *Dungeon* Magazine #177's introduction:

"Of all artifacts to grace the world with their presence, perhaps none is more dangerous than the infamous *Deck of Many Things*. The artifact has appeared in every edition of Dungeons & Dragons, and first appeared in the *Greyhawk* supplement in 1975. Through each of its iterations, the *Deck of Many Things* has remained a dangerous and chaotic artifact. This 4th Edition update of the classic artifact retains much of the traditional version's chaotic nature while bringing its mechanics more in line with what modern Dungeon Masters can use in their games."

Rodney Thompson recreated the *Deck*, casting it not as a mere magic item, but now as an artifact. And while his iteration maintains the cards' effects, it also provides some solid roleplaying structure to their results. Take the Donjon card, for example. Its earlier explanation read in full:

"This signifies imprisonment—either by spell or by some creature/being at your option. All gear and spells will be stripped from the victim in any case. The new version expands on what this can mean in your game, should a player ever suffer the misfortune of drawing it:"



Donjon

You are imprisoned by magic—which leaves you in a state of dreamless sleep—deep beneath the earth. Though your body vanishes, your magic items and other gear remain behind. The party gains the following major quest:

Major Quest–Prison of the Donjon

The PCs must find the location of your imprisonment. The prison is deep beneath the earth (possibly within a dungeon, or in a drow citadel in the Underdark). The PCs must journey to that location, find your imprisoned body, and use the Remove Affliction ritual to free you from the prison.

Reward: 16,000 XP

Donjon/The Void

Two of the cards in the *Deck of Many Things*, the Donjon and the Void, each remove a character from the party, either physically or mentally. If a player gains the effects of one of these cards, you should allow the player to create a new character (at the same level as the character who drew from the *Deck of Many Things*) who joins the party soon after. This can be a good chance for the player to try out a race, class, or character archetype he or she has not played before, so don't be afraid to encourage them to try something radically different from the character that is imprisoned. When the PCs complete the major quest and rescue that player's character, give the player the option of continuing to play the surrogate character, or resuming play as the imprisoned character. If they choose the latter, apply any XP gained since the character was imprisoned to that character, in addition to any XP earned from the quest itself. That way, the player isn't punished for resuming the imprisoned character, and the story can continue as normal.

And so we leave you wishing the best of luck in your draw—and the following concept sketches for what cards you may well come across. Enjoy!

About the Authors

It is possible that Bart Carroll is a relative of the beholder, for there are remarkable similarities between the two species. Bart dwells only at great depths of the ocean, floating slowly about, stalking prey. He has two huge crab-like pincers to seize its victims and a mouth full of small sharp teeth. His primary weapons, however, are his eyes. The author has a large central eye which emits a blinding flash of light to dazzle and stun those in its unless a saving throw versus death ray/poison is made. The author also has two smaller eyes on long stalks with which he is able to create an illusion; or, acting independently, the small eyes are able to cast *hold person* and *hold monster* spells respectively.

Steve Winter is a writer, game designer, and web producer living in the Seattle area. He's been involved with publishing **D&D** in one form or another since 1981. Tiny people and monsters made of plastic and lead are among his favorite obsessions.